

THE WORLD'S BEST CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS

Est 1923 · JUNE 2019

GRAMOPHONE

gramophone.co.uk

PAVAROTTI

and his greatest roles

PLUS

Four Last Songs: inside Strauss's powerful score

Paul McCreesh celebrates 20th-century coronation music

Remembering early music pioneer Christopher Hogwood





MEET KIRILL PETRENKO

The start of a new era! On 23 August, Kirill Petrenko conducts the Berliner Philharmoniker for the first time as their chief conductor. As a foretaste, Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony is now being released on their first CD edition together. It features a performance acclaimed by the press and public alike which vividly brings out both the finest nuances of colour and grand psychological drama.

Peter Tchaikovsky

Symphony No. 6 "Pathétique"

Berliner Philharmoniker

Kirill Petrenko conductor

1 CD / SACD



Order now at
www.berliner-philharmoniker-recordings.com

www.petrenko-live.de

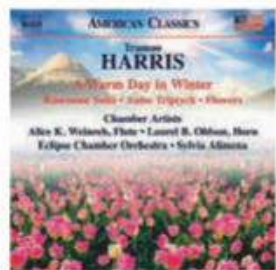
GRAMOPHONE

ISOUNDS OF AMERICA

A special eight-page section focusing on recent recordings from the US and Canada

T Harris

Rosemoor Suite^a. Aulos Triptych^b. Concertino for Horn and Chamber Orchestra^c. Flowers^d. Sonata for Two Bassoons and Piano^e. Concertino for Flute and Chamber Orchestra^f.
abf Alice Kogan Weinreb, b Aaron Goldman, b Carole Bean, b Leah Arsenault Barrick fls ad Nicholas Stovall ob ad Paul Cigan cl ad Truman Harris, e Sue Heineman, e Steven Wilson bns acd Laurel Bennert Ohlson hn be Audrey Andrist pf cf Eclipse Chamber Orchestra / Sylvia Alimena
Naxos American Classics © 8 559858 (76' • DDD)



Naxos's American Classics series turns to Truman Harris (b1945), his tenures

as bassoonist in Washington's National Symphony and Eclipse Chamber orchestras explaining why woodwind features prominently across his output – with the present disc a representative selection.

His fluency is well demonstrated in both the vignettes of *Aulos Triptych* and the laconicism of the Double Bassoon Sonata, both of which should appeal to musicians who find themselves participating in such unusual combinations. Of the works for wind quintet, *Rosemoor Suite* offers five evocations of neighbourhood environs, by turns winsome and engaging, not least in the pithy theme-and-variations of 'Fantasia' or the lively imagery conjured up by 'Silent Movie'. If these inhabit the urbane neoclassicism of Françaix, the six briefer miniatures of *Flowers* seem closer to Poulenc in their graceful contours enlivened by harmonic piquancy.

More substantial fare is provided by the two concertinos. That for horn follows its muscular opening *Allegro* with an 'Arias and Recitatives' whose incremental revealing of unexpected depths is thrown into relief by the droll closing Rondo. The Concertino for flute follows a similar trajectory – its wistful *Andante* as deftly complemented by the elegant opening *Allegro* as by the perky closing *Allegretto* with its affectionate homage to the French woodwind tradition.

GRAMOPHONE talks to ...

David Shuler

The conductor of The Choir of St Luke in the Fields in New York talks about recording Palestrina



What draws you to Palestrina's music?

Late-Renaissance polyphony forms the core of our repertoire, both for concerts and church services. The music of Palestrina, of course, looms large in this canon. In addition to the sheer beauty of his music, I particularly appreciate his many and varied approaches to motet and Mass compositions. He is unquestionably a master of counterpoint.

Why did you chose the *Missa Tu es Petrus*?

We performed the *Missa Tu es Petrus* a couple of years ago, and it immediately became a favourite. There is no mistaking that this is mature Palestrina: it is one of his finest and most ingenious parody Masses, and one of his most luminous compositions. Also, this Mass setting has not been recorded often, unlike, say, the *Missa Papae Marcelli*.

You achieve a gorgeous choral blend – does regularly singing together help?

Thank you. First, I have to say that it is a great privilege to count as members of the choir

some of the finest choral singers in New York City. The choir does rehearse and perform together on a weekly basis, in church services and concerts, which makes a huge difference, and allows for a unified stylistic approach and an opportunity to hone the sound blend.

Why did you make this recording away from your usual home at St Luke's?

The acoustic at St Luke in the Fields is perfect for performing early music. There is a lovely bloom to the sound. But unfortunately outside noise can be intrusive, making recording almost impossible. The acoustic at the Church of St Mary the Virgin is quite different – a much more spacious and reverberant space. In fact, St Mary's has just about the ideal acoustic for recording Renaissance choral music.

The concertinos receive admirable performances by Laurel Bennert Ohlson and Alice Kogan Weinreb, while all the other players confirm the respect and regard in which Harris is held. Indeed, the appeal of this music to wind musicians everywhere can hardly be doubted.

Richard Whitehouse

Liang

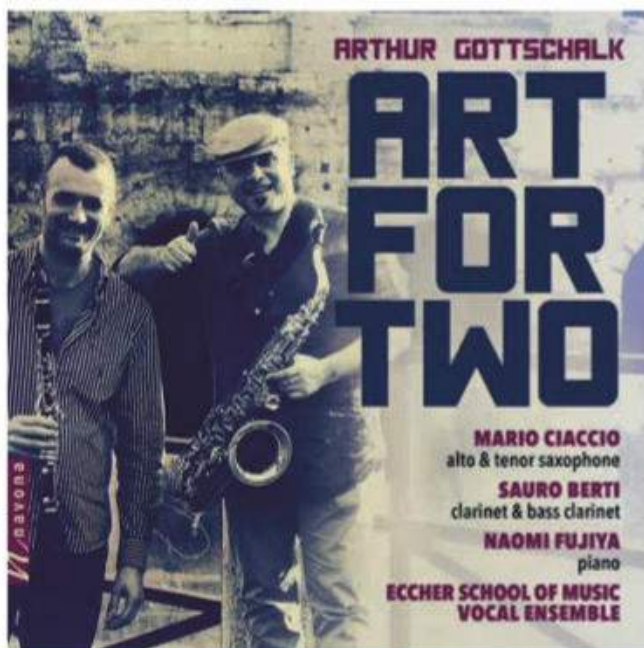
A Thousand Mountains, a Million Streams. Five Seasons^a. Xiaoxiang^b

b Gao Hong pipa a Chien-Kwan Lin alto sax
Boston Modern Orchestra Project / Gil Rose
BMOP/sound © 1061 (57' • DDD/DSD)



Lei Liang (b1972) was born in China then in the grip of the Cultural

Revolution, but left to study in the US and has remained there ever since, taking citizenship in 2006. The alto saxophone concerto *Xiaoxiang* was composed shortly afterwards (2009, though based on an earlier piece for saxophone and electronics); it is given here in its 2014 revision. A concentrated (ten-and-a-half minute) concerto-cum-tone poem,



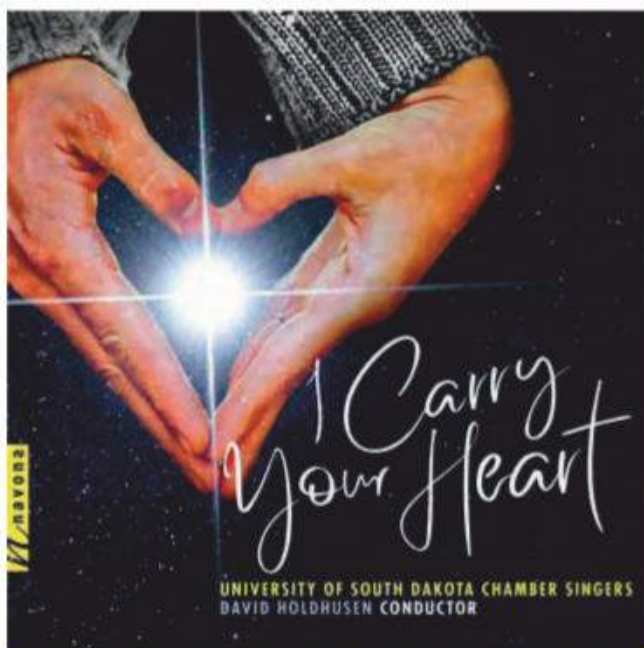
ART FOR TWO CIACCIO / BERTI / GOTTSCHALK

Combine the genius of a composer whose work is described as “infectious, loud, and fun” (*Gramophone Magazine*) and “fascinatingly strange” (*BBC Music Magazine*), add the colorful virtuosity of two Italian woodwind greats, and throw in an acclaimed pianist for good measure. What do you get? **ART FOR TWO**.

NAVONA (NV6185)

arthurgottschalk.com

navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6185

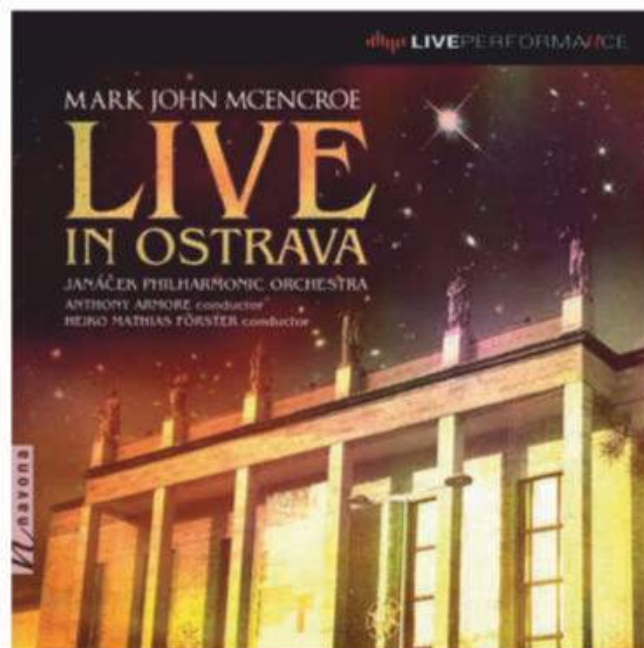


I CARRY YOUR HEART DAVID HOLDHUSEN

It is not often that one encounters a choir – professional or otherwise – whose unity, technical perfection, and musical expressiveness would be a match for the **Chamber Singers at the University of South Dakota**. **I CARRY YOUR HEART** presents a breathtaking, exhilarating cruise through a cappella choral music from around the world. NAVONA (NV6203)

usd.edu/faculty-and-staff/David-Holdhusen

navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6203



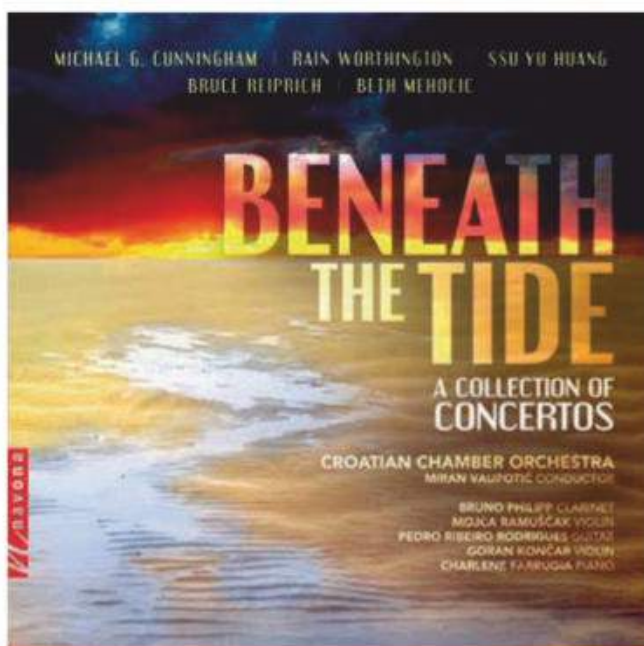
LIVE IN OSTRAVA MARK JOHN MCENCROE

With **LIVE IN OSTRAVA**, accomplished Australian composer **Mark John McEncroe** once more serves up an hour of atmospheric orchestral music – demonstrating with great vigor that it is possible to set a counterpoint to musical academia even as a late vocation.

NAVONA (NV6215)

markjohnmcencroecomposer.com

navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6215

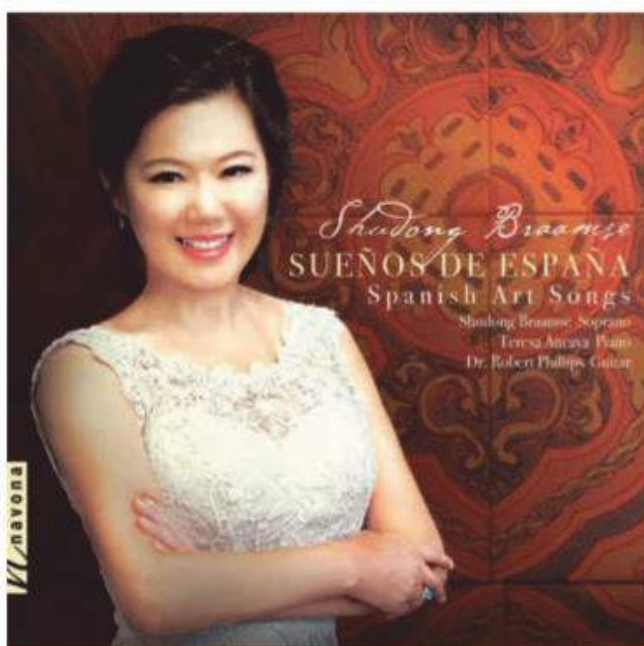


BENEATH THE TIDE

BENEATH THE TIDE, a reflection on human emotion and experience through a collection of five concertos, features the triumphant *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* by **Beth Mehocic**. *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* is a grand, thematic performance with bright brass, lively percussion, and swooping piano gestures, and its presence in the listening sphere is not to be missed. NAVONA (NV6216)

bethmehocic.com

navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6216



SUEÑOS DE ESPAÑA SHUDONG BRAAMSE

Coloratura soprano **Shudong Braamse** enchants the ear with rich canciones of the Spanish tradition that touch on love, death, and life everlasting. Braamse's technical virtuosity is perfectly complemented by the sincere emotion she communicates in each song. NAVONA (NV6211)

seu.edu/academics/faculty/slbraamse

navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6211



IN TANDEM: SOLOS & DUOS

IN TANDEM offers the latest innovative sounds in solo and duo compositions, and **Steven Kennedy's** multifaceted storytelling is no exception. Kennedy's *Marian Sonata* represents a polyptych of the Life of Christ in four pieces. Interpreted through the grace of the violin and piano, *Marian Sonata* is a moving, intimate work, beckoning listeners into the narrative.

NAVONA (NV6227)

sakennedymusic.com

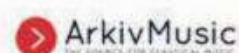
navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6227

LISTENING ROOM

Click the camera icon while searching in your **Spotify** mobile app and scan the code below to listen to selections from these albums.



AVAILABLE NOW FOR PURCHASE OR STREAMING



Navona Records, Ravello Records, Big Round Records, and Ansonica Records are imprints of PARMA Recordings.
www.parmarecordings.com





Lots of fun and mildly addictive: the Janoska Ensemble let their hair down in style – see review on page V

its single span was derived from an incident in Xiaoxiang province during the Cultural Revolution when a widow haunted the official who murdered her husband by wailing in despair from the forest. Her cries suffuse the solo part but find echoes in the orchestral texture as well.

Liang thinks of himself as a painter in sound and refers to his use of a ‘sonic brush’. His idiom is a fusion of Chinese and Western – if not exactly tonally based, still rooted in appealing euphony. This is most evident in the two companion (and longer) works. *Five Seasons* originated in 2010 as a quintet for pipa – the Chinese lute – and string quartet but the composer arranged its five movements (‘Dew-Drop’; ‘Water Play’; ‘Cicada Chorus’; ‘Leaves-Fall’; ‘Drumming’) for string orchestra in 2014. The concerto also nods in expression to the five elements – wood, fire, metal, water and earth – colouring the textures in each movement.

In *A Thousand Mountains, a Million Streams* (written in 2017 specifically for BMOP) Liang’s tonal and textural palettes become ever more exquisite, ranging from sonorities at the edge of silence in ‘Healing Rain Drops’ to full-orchestral might describing the shredding of landscapes. Liang’s Chinese-inflected sound world is

never less than fascinating and always deeply involving. The BMOP navigate their way through his precisely calculated sonorities with aplomb and accuracy. The engineering copes with the extremes of the dynamic range superbly.

Guy Rickards

Palestrina

Missa Tu es Petrus. Canite tuba. Caro mea. Improperium expectavit. Sicut cervus. Surrexit pastor bonus. Tu es Petrus.

The Choir of St Luke in the Fields /

David Shuler

MSR Classics © MS1698 (64’ • DDD • T/t)



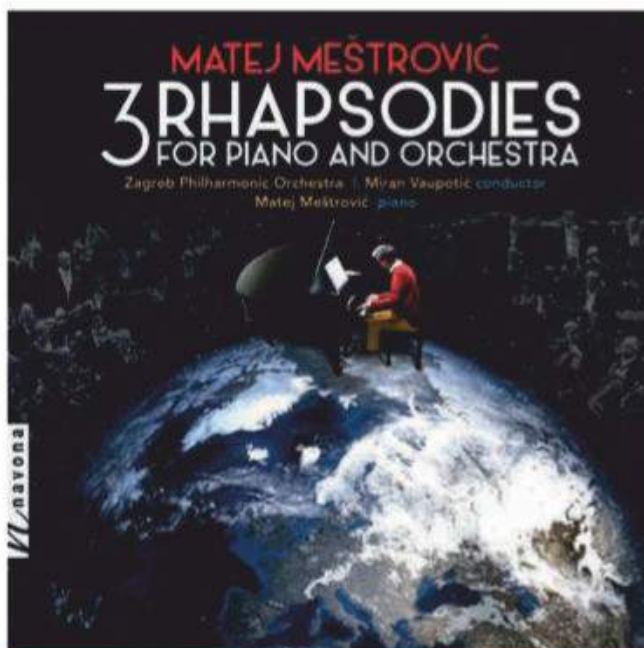
This radiant new Palestrina recital from the Greenwich Village-based Choir of St Luke in the Fields commands tonal beauty and emotional flow that has a personal feel. This may be because the context in which Palestrina wrote his hundreds of Masses and motets still exists today: a need for timeless music that shines light upon the soul, as human blueprints are turned miraculously into sanctified sound.

Led by David Shuler, director of music and organist at St Luke’s since

1988, the 14-member choir move naturally with a pleasant dynamic range and a gentle colour palette. The waves of music they produce sound like they were designed to be performed for papal audiences in St Peter’s. These performances are concerned more with the warmth of human dialogue – with blending lines rather than maintaining their integrity – and less with achieving spiritual purity by being historically rigorous. I wonder which approach would have been more likely to persuade Cardinal Borromeo that Palestrina’s music belonged in the church.

The warm, spacious recordings – made not at St Luke’s in the West Village but at the Church of St Mary the Virgin in midtown Manhattan – provide an audiophile display of Palestrina’s vivid writing. The blending of the voices halfway through *Tu es Petrus* is quite astonishing. In *Sicut cervus*, as the choir relaxes into deeper regions of sound and dimension, the microphones capture the women with an especially lovely bloom.

John Bradley’s beautifully written booklet notes reminds us further that this music was at the service of words that were meant for listeners to reflect on. **Laurence Vittes**



3 RHAPSODIES MATEJ MEŠTROVIĆ

Music lovers who have ever found themselves wishing that contemporary classical music would sound more aesthetic, more energetic, or more dramatic are in for a treat with Croatian composer **Matej Meštrović's 3 RHAPSODIES**, a grand, exuberant celebration of the great Slavic orchestral tradition – and a breathtaking demonstration of its astounding versatility. *NAVONA (NV6219)*

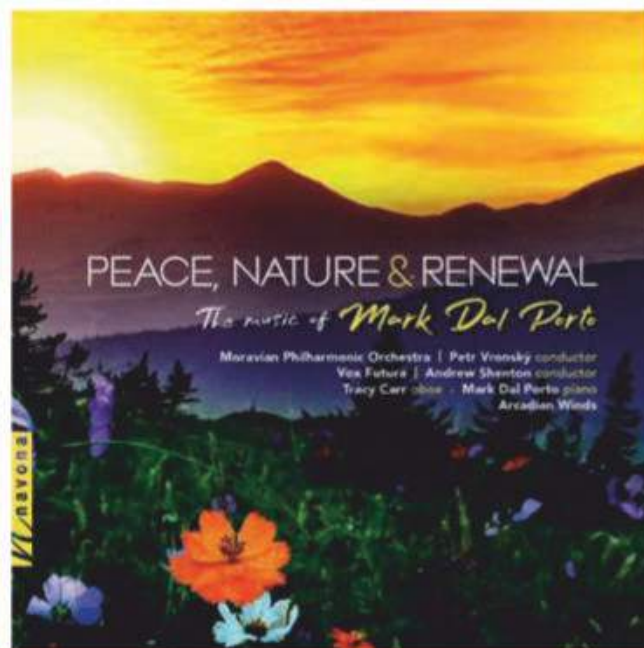
matejmestrovic.com
navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6219



DUO FANTASY DUO526

Violinist Kerry DuWors and pianist Futaba Niekawa, professionally known as **duo526**, stun with their dazzling interpretation of Villa Lobos, Bax, and Bolcom on their new aptly-titled album **DUO FANTASY**. Played with great insightfulness and panache, DUO FANTASY is an extraordinary treat for lovers of early 20th-century music.

duo526.com
navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6231



PEACE, NATURE & RENEWAL MARK DAL PORTO

PEACE, NATURE & RENEWAL is more than just a creative portrait of composer **Mark Dal Porto's** unique compositional mind. It compellingly demonstrates the powerful inspiration that both Nature and poetry can bring to music, from intimate chamber settings to grand, vast choral and orchestral compositions. *NAVONA (NV6220)*

markdalporto.com
navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6220



THE GERSHWIN & BERNSTEIN CONNECTION ELIANE RODRIGUES

Masterful concertist **Eliane Rodrigues** presents her latest collection of piano performances with Navona Records. **THE GERSHWIN & BERNSTEIN CONNECTION** gives listeners a refreshing new take on three classics, honoring both legendary composers while also offering something new. *NAVONA (NV6230)*

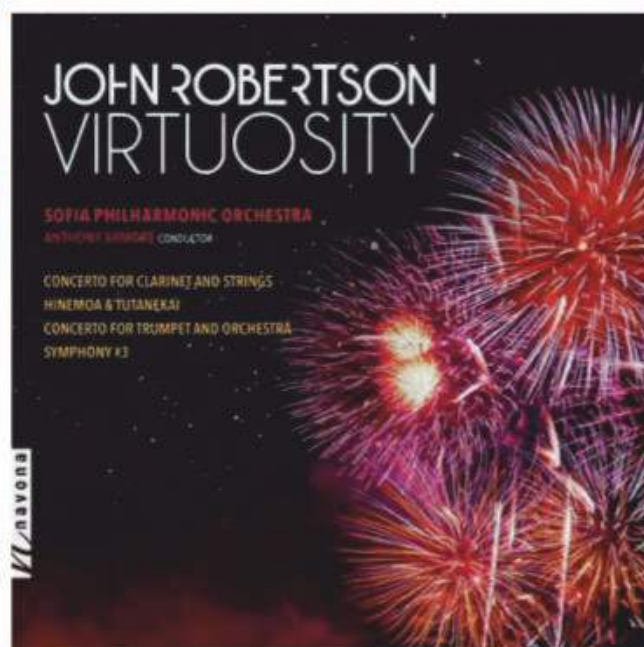
elianerodrigues.com
navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6230



PARALLEL REALMS SERGIO CERVETTI

Accomplished composer **Sergio Cervetti's** newest release invites listeners into orchestral conversations surrounding memory, faith, and science. **PARALLEL REALMS**, showcases the Uruguayan-American's mastery of 21st-century techniques, with a complete liberation from the restrictions of form and traditional harmony. *NAVONA (NV6217)*

sergiocervetti.com
navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6217



VIRTUOSITY JOHN ROBERTSON

Characterized by a unique style of instrumentation and experimentation with formality, **VIRTUOSITY** is the colorful expression of composer **John Robertson's** symphonic creativity. **VIRTUOSITY** combines a clarinet and a trumpet concerto, a symphony, and an orchestral fantasy based on a Maori love story – all on one album. *NAVONA (NV6223)*

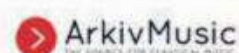
navonarecords.com/catalog/nv6223

LISTENING ROOM

Click the camera icon while searching in your **Spotify** mobile app and scan the code below to listen to selections from these albums.



AVAILABLE NOW FOR PURCHASE OR STREAMING



Navona Records, Ravello Records, Big Round Records, and Ansonica Records are imprints of PARMA Recordings.
www.parmarecordings.com





'Revolution'

JS Bach Air **F Janoska** Leo's Dance **R Janoska** Hello, Prince! **Kreisler** Praeludium and Allegro in the Style of G Pugnani **Lennon/McCartney** Let it be. Penny Lane. Yesterday **Mozart** The Marriage of Figaro **Porter** Night and day **Tchaikovsky** Mélodie **Wieniawski** Variations on an Original Theme

Janoska Ensemble

DG © 725 9326GH (63' • DDD)



This second album from the three brothers from Bratislava and their brother-in-law from Switzerland may hardly be revolutionary but it's lots of fun and mildly addictive. In fact, there's

evidence that Janoska is beginning to take the US by storm. After touring eight cities in 2017, they returned in April to play 10 more, including the Savings Bank Music Hall in Troy, New York – where Dorian Recordings made its fabled audiophile recordings – San Antonio and Green Bay. YouTube shows them to be most charismatic performers.

Janoska's take on Kreisler's *Praeludium and Allegro* is appropriately outrageous for a piece that was itself a fake, interrupting the 'original' formality with brilliant riffs and cadenzas so wildly imaginative that they seem just right. Their Air from Bach's Third Suite, featuring brother-in-law Julius Darvas, is straight out of a Django Reinhardt/Stéphane Grappelli dream. The *Marriage of Figaro* Overture begins with the Marseillaise and finds

additional colour and manic hilarity in klezmer tunes and attitudes, complete with cimbalom, before finding its way back to the Mozart.

These are far from computer-derived concoctions. A pizzicato violin playing the opening movement of Bach's First Cello Suite provides a haunting subtext to 'Yesterday', one of three Beatles songs. And they tangle up Cole Porter's 'Night and day' with Beethoven's *Moonlight* Sonata in some very intoxicating ways.

Janoska show a human touch too, Roman and František writing sweet songs for their young sons, the latter's punctuated at the end by a child's laugh. Vividly recorded at Tonzauber Studios in Vienna.

Lawrence Vittes

Kimmel Center, Philadelphia

Our monthly guide to North American venues

Year opened 2001

Architect Rafael Viñoly

Capacity Verizon Hall: 2500 seats; Perelman Theater: 650 seats

Resident ensemble Philadelphia Orchestra

The Kimmel Center's arrival in Philadelphia in 2001 was roundly considered overdue – some might say by a century. The venerable Academy of Music, often said to resemble La Scala in Milan, had continually charmed audiences since its 1857 opening. But its Philadelphia Orchestra-dominated schedule left Opera Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Ballet with disadvantageous dates. Plans for new venues came and went.

What Philadelphia needed was 'wow' factor, and the architect Rafael Viñoly delivered that: two free-standing concert halls – the 2500-seat Verizon Hall and the 650-seat Perelman Theater – encased under a 150-foot-high glass dome that occupies an entire city block. The building immediately became a signature landmark on the Philadelphia landscape. Inside, the centre's eight resident companies – headed by the Philadelphia Orchestra along with modern dance, pops concerts and much else – allowed something the city had only glimpsed: chamber opera. The Perelman Theater's revolving stage turns a chamber music hall into a fully equipped small opera house, where the Kimmel Center, Opera Philadelphia and the Curtis (Institute) Opera Theatre have co-presented repertoire from *Wozzeck* to the stage premiere of Leonard Bernstein's revised *A Quiet Place*.

But what were those swing sets doing in the indoor plaza this past winter? With swingers wearing virtual reality goggles? That was one in a series of ongoing events that utilise the area between the Perelman Theater and Verizon Hall that are meant to invite the non-ticket-holding public. This one – with its virtual reality landscapes experienced while in motion – drew 7261 people over nine weeks. The larger success story is the business model: by consolidating management of the Kimmel Center with the nearby Academy of Music and Merriam Theater – while also presenting



touring Broadway shows – the Kimmel campus presents more than 1400 events a year.

Yet the Kimmel Center (named after the philanthropist Sidney Kimmel) had a rocky gestation. The centre was so unfinished at its December 2001 opening that musicians in the Perelman Theater gamely wore hard hats. The biggest flashpoint was the Verizon Hall acoustics. Though an improvement over the Academy of Music, with an inviting, cello-shaped interior, Verizon Hall was dubbed 'an acoustical Sahara' by the critic Tim Page. Despite a \$1.3 million upgrade in 2011, the curved walls still mean the acoustical picture is uneven within the hall. But the microphone set-up for live DG recordings has been a revelation, starting with *The Rite of Spring* (DG, 1/14), which has a focus, lustre and depth of field that the Philadelphia Orchestra has seldom had in its entire recorded history. Now most live concerts conducted by music director Yannick Nézet-Séguin are candidates for release.

Nothing is perfect, as Riccardo Muti said from the Verizon stage on a visit to Philadelphia. And if Kimmel president and CEO Anne Ewers could change one thing, it's the street-level architecture, 'so the excitement within would be more apparent from the outside'. **David Patrick Stearns**

GRAMOPHONE

Choose the right
subscription for you

- THE GRAMOPHONE CLUB
 - PRINT EDITION
 - DIGITAL CLUB
 - DIGITAL EDITION
 - REVIEWS DATABASE



THE WORLD'S LEADING CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS MAGAZINE

EXPAND YOUR COLLECTION

With the world's most authoritative classical music reviews section, written by our unrivalled, international and objective panel of expert reviewers

INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS

We are devoted to exploring the artists stamping their mark on recording today, with captivating features and exclusive interviews

COMPOSER PROFILES

We celebrate composers both past and present, providing you with a unique perspective on the lives and work of the giants of the classical music world

SOUNDS OF AMERICA

Every issue includes a special eight-page section focusing on exciting new releases from North American artists and labels

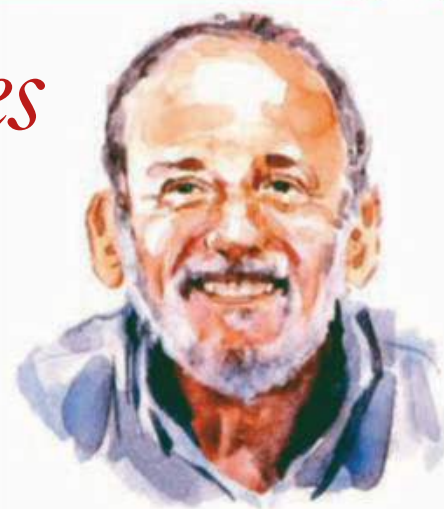
Visit www.magsubscriptions.com/gramophone
or call +44 (0)1722 716997

Pictured: Violinist Janine Jansen (DECCA / © Marco Borggreve) who featured on the January 2016 cover of Gramophone. Full annual retail price for print only (13 issues) is \$142.87; print only annual subscription or Digital Edition or Reviews Database (\$101); Digital Club (\$134); Gramophone Club (\$167). If choosing a print option, an addition overseas P+P charge will be added at \$35.75 (Outside EU). If you have a subscription enquiry then please email subscriptions@markallengroup.com



A LETTER FROM *Los Angeles*

In our series exploring the range of music-making in North America, Laurence Vittes reports from California



With the July 9 opening of the Hollywood Bowl on the horizon, LA's classical music season hurtles to a close, becoming more youth-orientated, more culturally diverse, decentralised and expansive, with a flourishing new music scene.

The city also seems to have turned a corner on how to build a classical music community in a city laid out over such vast distances and without robust public transportation. The answer may lie in the many series and home concerts springing up to satisfy and create local demand, whose growth fuels the interest in bigger theatres and performing arts centres.

The season started in September with an eight-mile street party entertained by 1800 musicians, artists and dancers, connecting the LA Philharmonic's two homes: Walt Disney Concert Hall downtown and the Hollywood Bowl eight miles north on the 110 Freeway. The evening ended with a free concert at the Bowl, with Gustavo Dudamel and LA Phil plus pop stars Katy Perry, Herbie Hancock and Kali Uchis. Also on hand was Dudamel's baby, the Youth Orchestra Los Angeles, for whom Frank Gehry designed a new hall in Inglewood, half an hour south of the Walt Disney Concert Hall, where a new stadium is going up for the professional American football team, the Los Angeles Rams.

April started as Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla kept the LA Phil together heart and soul with a wildly passionate Patricia Kopatchinskaja in Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, and produced sonic miracles with the premiere of Unsuk Chin's *SPIRA, A Concerto for Orchestra*, a tour de force with a *Wizard of Oz* sensibility in which two vibraphones played pivotal roles. Later in April Esa-Pekka Salonen returned to his old haunts with two concerts of Stravinsky: *Funeral Song, Agon, The Rite of Spring, Orpheus* and *Perséphone*, the last in a staging by Peter Sellars. Meanwhile, after celebrating their 50th birthday last year, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra rounded out the month by performing Mozart's Requiem under their incoming new music director, Jaime Martín.

On the Westside, Carlos Izcaray, the young Venezuelan conductor of the American Youth Orchestra, who had performed a programme titled 'The Year of the Woman' in March, made a pledge: 'From now on, 50 per cent or more of new music performed by the youth orchestra will be the work of female composers. These are already composers that I follow,' Izcaray said, singling out Joan Tower and Jennifer Higdon. The conductorless orchestra Kaleidoscope, which in March played a programme combining works by Alison Yun-Fei Jiang, Meilina Tsui, George Walker, Anna Pidgorna and Ninfea Cruttwell-Reade with Brahms, in May held the final rounds of its 2019 instrumental and vocal competitions.

LA's chamber music situation, which has slipped in recent years, recently received a much-needed boost in the form of Chamber Music LA, a collective of eight organisations based in the city: Camerata Pacifica, The Colburn School, The Da Camera Society, Jacaranda Music, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Martin

Haselböck's period ensemble Musica Angelica – which in April performed Bach's *St Matthew Passion* – Pittance Chamber

Music and Salastina Music Society. It is in many of the series presented by these organisations that the city's entrepreneurial new music scene finds its focus. To these groups we can add the American Youth Symphony, Tonality, The Industry, Ojai Youth Opera, wild Up and Brightwork, each with its own profile and attracting a local and increasingly city-wide following.

The Dilijan Chamber Music Series represents another programming direction, dedicated to showcasing traditional pieces of Western classical chamber music alongside Armenian chamber works. LA's Armenian community has contributed enormously to the city's musical excitement, substance and education, as attested to by the recent release on Naxos of Ian Krouse's *Armenian*

Requiem, a commission from Vatsche Barsoumian's Lark Music Academy.

Two smaller houses are worth noting: The Broad Stage in Santa Monica, where Plácido Domingo

and Ailyn Pérez sang an evening of Italian, Spanish and Mexican songs, arias and duets; and the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in relentlessly posh Beverly Hills, which in one week presented the intense Tetzlaff Trio in Schumann and Dvořák, and co-hosted a vintage British car rally.

The Colburn School, opposite Walt Disney Concert Hall, presented its usual offering of student and faculty orchestral and chamber music concerts including a visit in March from Eliso Virsaladze, who gave a masterclass and played Haydn, Mozart, and Schumann. Ten minutes south, the USC Thornton School of Music held a four-day Chamber Music Festival, presented its Baroque Sinfonia in a programme called *When Jubal Struck the Corded Shell* and announced that the third Piatigorsky International Cello Festival in 2020 will break new ground with seven women cellists among the 25 men and more of an interest in modern music.

LA Opera may not have yet fully recovered from the bankruptcy scare they suffered in 2009, yet in March Thaddeus Strassberger scored with a Technicolor cinematic version of Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito* featuring spectacular singing by Guanqun Yu and Elizabeth DeShong, the visual energy compensating for the production's basically static energy; when the Act 2 curtain rose on the haunted shell of Rome it elicited waves of applause.

Farther afield, the Soraya performing arts centre in Northridge, at the north end of the San Fernando Valley, is starting to reap the rewards of its planning, and the annual Ojai Festival up the coast, ever more vital 72 years after its founding in 1947, will kick off on June 3 when this year's music director Barbara Hannigan leads a fully staged performance of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, featuring young artists from Hannigan's Equilibrium Mentoring Initiative and this year's ensemble-in-residence, LUDWIG.

It is in many of these chamber music series that the city's entrepreneurial new music scene finds its focus

THE SOUND OF SUMMER



FOUR
ACCLAIMED
ORCHESTRAS

STUNNING
MOUNTAIN
VENUES

RELAXED
SOCIAL
SETTING

Each summer the world's
top classical musicians are
drawn to Vail, Colorado for
an experience unlike any other.
Why not join them?

**CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
VIENNA – BERLIN**
DALLAS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES




BRAVO!VAIL
MUSIC FESTIVAL

JUNE 20–AUGUST 4, 2019
VAIL, COLORADO

Learn More & Get Tickets
BRAVOVAIL.ORG | 877.812.5700

HAILED AS ONE OF THE TOP 15 CLASSICAL MUSIC FESTIVALS IN 2017 & 2018 BY **THE NEW YORK TIMES**

Celebrating a star – and an era, and an art form

A colleague and I were playing that old parlour game the other day: who is the most famous person you've ever met? Given our jobs, we're both privileged to regularly meet some of the most high-profile classical artists today – and yet even the greatest of those are still likely to be trumped by, say, a pop star, or an actor, or royalty. And yet if you'd ever met Pavarotti, then he, most likely, would have given you the winning card. The tenor was, quite simply, one of the world's most famous people. That a classical artist achieved such fame in today's world is extraordinary. It didn't happen that often before either (Jenny Lind, Enrico Caruso and Maria Callas are potential exceptions), and for all the prominence of the likes of Simon Rattle and Daniel Barenboim, it hasn't really happened since.

The new film by Ron Howard, arriving soon in a cinema near you, promises to explore some of the reasons behind the Pavarotti phenomenon. But above everything else there was simply extraordinary music-making. And so that's what we've decided to focus on in this issue. I asked six of our leading opera critics to choose one role that they felt defined, for them, Pavarotti's art. I'd expected a bit of horse-trading to be required, but interestingly everyone proposed different roles. It's clear that they all felt, when recalling their encounters with Pavarotti's art, that here was someone very special indeed. But it's also a recurring thread that his recording achievements were not his alone – he may have sold out stadiums with his arias, but when it came to opera, he was a character in a drama, his



brilliance also shining forth in charming exchanges or duets of memorable beauty. A celebration of Pavarotti is also, therefore, in part a celebration of an extraordinary era of exquisite singers.

It's also a celebration of recording. As with at least one of those critics, my only encounter with Pavarotti's revered music-making was on disc. It's 12 years since he died, but we need to turn back years, even decades, to find the instinctive, lyrical voice upon which his reputation was built. His talent emerged, thankfully, at a point when recording technology was able to capture it in sound quality which, even now, feels uncompromised. But without recording – and without the commitment of labels, primarily in his case Decca, to preserve some of the greatest productions by the day's leading casts – Pavarotti's finest moments (and those of his esteemed collaborators from Dame Joan Sutherland to Mirella Freni) would not be with us today.

Currently, there are still labels which show such vision – and they're often the ones that commit to an artist and stick by them over many years and projects (Erato's Berlioz recordings under the conductor John Nelson and DG's Mozart operas under Yannick Nézet-Séguin immediately spring to mind). Such labels need the ongoing support of listeners (whether CD collectors, or subscribers to streaming services): it's thanks to them that the glories of today's operatic world will be just as vivid to tomorrow's audience as those of Pavarotti's heyday are to ours.

martin.cullingford@markallengroup.com

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



'In the probable absence of an invitation to the next coronation, the next best thing was being in Ely Cathedral

for Paul McCreesh's thrilling live recording with his Gabrieli forces,' says **JEREMY NICHOLAS**, who interviews the conductor this issue. 'We even got to participate – it was an unforgettable experience.'



CHARLOTTE GARDNER enjoyed chatting with Matthew Barley about recording Taverner's

The Protecting Veil in the footsteps of Steven Isserlis. 'He told me he didn't think he could better Steven's recording, but that he could place it in a different context – and that made for a fascinating interview.'



FABRICE FITCH was delighted to write about Ockeghem's Requiem for this issue's Collection: 'I've lived with

and thought about this work for so many years that getting to grips with its discography seemed long overdue; it was also fascinating to find that some recent recordings have really raised the game.'

THE REVIEWERS Andrew Achenbach • Nalen Anthoni • Tim Ashley • Mike Ashman • Michelle Assay • Richard Bratby • Edward Breen • Liam Cagney • Alexandra Coghlan • Rob Cowan (consultant reviewer) • Jeremy Dibble • Peter Dickinson • Jed Distler • Adrian Edwards • Richard Fairman • David Fallows • David Fanning • Andrew Farach-Colton • Iain Fenlon • Neil Fisher • Fabrice Fitch • Jonathan Freeman-Attwood • Charlotte Gardner • David Gutman • Christian Hoskins • Lindsay Kemp • Philip Kennicott • Richard Lawrence • Andrew Mellor • Ivan Moody • Bryce Morrison • Hannah Nepil • Jeremy Nicholas • Christopher Nickol • Geoffrey Norris • Richard Osborne • Stephen Plaistow • Mark Pullinger • Peter Quantrell • Guy Rickards • Malcolm Riley • Marc Rochester • Patrick Rucker • Edward Seckerson • Hugo Shirley • Pwyll ap Siôn • Harriet Smith • David Patrick Stearns • David Threasher • David Vickers • John Warrack • Richard Whitehouse • Arnold Whittall • Richard Wigmore • William Yeoman

Gramophone, which has been serving the classical music world since 1923, is first and foremost a monthly review magazine, delivered today in both print and digital formats. It boasts an eminent and knowledgeable panel of experts, which reviews the full range of classical music recordings. Its reviews are completely independent. In addition to reviews, its interviews and features help readers to explore in greater depth the recordings that the magazine covers, as well as offer insight into the work of composers and performers. It is *the* magazine for the classical record collector, as well as for the enthusiast starting a voyage of discovery.

CONTENTS

Volume 97 Number 1175

EDITORIAL

Phone 020 7738 5454 **Fax** 020 7733 2325
email gramophone@markallengroup.com
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER Martin Cullingford
DEPUTY EDITOR Sarah Kirkup / 020 7501 6365
REVIEWS EDITOR Tim Parry / 020 7501 6367
ONLINE CONTENT EDITOR James McCarthy / 020 7501 6366
SUB-EDITOR David Threasher / 020 7501 6370
SUB-EDITOR Marija Đurić Speare
ART DIRECTOR Dinah Lone / 020 7501 6689
PICTURE EDITOR Sunita Sharma-Gibson
AUDIO EDITOR Andrew Everard
EDITORIAL ADMINISTRATOR Libby McPhee
THANKSTO Charlotte Gardner
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF James Jolly

ADVERTISING

Phone 020 7738 5454 **Fax** 020 7733 2325
email gramophone.ads@markallengroup.com
COMMERCIAL MANAGER
Esther Zuke / 020 7501 6368
SALES EXECUTIVE
Samuel Desborough / 020 7501 6373

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BACK ISSUES

0800 137201 **(UK)** +44 (0)1722 716997 **(overseas)**
subscriptions@markallengroup.com

PUBLISHING

Phone 020 7738 5454
HEAD OF MARKETING AND DIGITAL STRATEGY Luca Da Rè / 020 7501 6362
MARKETING MANAGER John Barnett / 020 7501 6233
MARKETING EXECUTIVE Hayley Sigrist / 020 7738 6459
GROUP INSTITUTIONAL SALES MANAGER Jas Atwal
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR Richard Hamshere / 01722 716997
PRODUCTION MANAGER Jon Redmayne
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Sally Boettcher / 01722 716997
SUBSCRIPTIONS MANAGER Chris Hoskins / 01722 716997
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Martin Cullingford
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR Paul Geoghegan
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Ben Allen
CHAIRMAN Mark Allen



A MARK ALLEN GROUP COMPANY

www.markallengroup.com

GRAMOPHONE is published by MA Music Leisure & Travel Ltd, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB, United Kingdom.
gramophone.co.uk
email **gramophone@markallengroup.com** or **subscriptions@markallengroup.com**
ISSN 0017-310X.

The June 2019 issue of *Gramophone* is on sale from May 17; the July issue will be on sale from June 14 (both UK). Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of statements in this magazine but we cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions, or for matters arising from clerical or printers' errors, or an advertiser not completing his contract. Regarding concert listings, all information is correct at the time of going to press. Letters to the editor requiring a personal reply should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. We have made every effort to secure permission to use copyright material. Where material has been used inadvertently or we have been unable to trace the copyright owner, acknowledgement will be made in a future issue.

UK subscription rate £64.
Printed in England by Southernprint.

North American edition (ISSN 0017-310X): *Gramophone*, USPS 881080, is published monthly with an additional issue in September by MA Music Leisure & Travel Ltd, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB, United Kingdom. The US annual subscription price is \$89. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named WN Shipping USA, 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Jamaica NY 11431. US Postmaster: Send address changes to Gramophone, WN Shipping USA, 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Subscription records are maintained at MA Music Leisure & Travel Ltd, Unit A, Buildings 1-5 Dinton Business Park, Catherine Ford Road, Dinton, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 5HZ, UK. Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.

© MA Music Leisure & Travel Ltd, 2019. All rights reserved. No part of the *Gramophone* may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without prior written permission of the Publishing Director.

Please read our privacy policy, by visiting privacypolicy.markallengroup.com. This will explain how we process, use & safeguard your data.

The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the editor or *Gramophone*. Advertisements in the journal do not imply endorsement of the products or services advertised.



Reviews

EDITOR'S CHOICE

7

The 12 most highly recommended recordings reviewed in this issue

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

38

Mirga Gražynitė-Tyla conducts the CBSO in revelatory accounts of two symphonies by Mieczysław Weinberg, putting the composer firmly on the map in his centenary year

ORCHESTRAL

40

Jukka-Pekka Saraste's Beethoven symphonies; Augustin Hadelich plays Brahms and Ligeti; Mahler from Les Siècles; new albums from saxophonists Amy Dickson and Jess Gillam

CHAMBER

56

Renaud Capuçon and David Fray play Bach; Kissin and the Emersons in concert in New York

INSTRUMENTAL

68

Rachel Podger plays Bach; complete Couperin from Carole Cerasi; the prolific Boris Giltburg plays Rachmaninov; Buniatishvili's Schubert

VOCAL

80

Two reconstructions of Bach's *St Mark Passion*; the Odyssean Ensemble's Byrd; a Sondheim double bill

OPERA

94

Auber's *La Sirène*; Sir Mark Elder directs Donizetti's little-known *L'ange de Niseda*

JAZZ & WORLD MUSIC

103

Reviews from our sister titles *Jazzwise* and *Songlines*

REISSUES

104

Seiji Ozawa's complete DG recordings; Robert Casadesu's Columbia Album Collection

BOX-SET ROUND-UP

109

REPLAY

110

Historic conductors; live Michelangeli

CLASSICS RECONSIDERED

112

Mark Pullinger and Tim Ashley compare notes on Sir Colin Davis's pioneering Berlioz *Les Troyens*

BOOKS

114

Opera in brief; Howard Skempton in conversation

GRAMOPHONE COLLECTION

116

A guide to Ockeghem's Requiem on record

REVIEWS INDEX

136



Features

FOR THE RECORD

8

All the latest classical music news, and more

PAVAROTTI'S GREATEST ROLES

16

As a new film about Pavarotti's life is released, we ask critics to each name the role that best defines this exceptional tenor – plus, legendary producer Michael Haas reflects on working with the star on Sir Georg Solti's recording of *Otello*

MUSIC FOR A CORONATION

26

Paul McCreeh and his Gabrieli forces have chosen the best 20th-century coronation music and used it to recreate a coronation service for the 21st century, recorded live at Ely Cathedral – Jeremy Nicholas was there

MATTHEW BARLEY

32

The cellist Matthew Barley reveres Isserlis's version of *The Protecting Veil*, but that hasn't stopped him from recording his own version of it – and also experimenting with lots more besides, as he tells Charlotte Gardner

MUSICIAN AND THE SCORE

54

Soprano Lise Davidsen and James Jolly meet in Copenhagen to discuss Strauss's *Four Last Songs*

ICONS

66

Lindsay Kemp sings the praises of that influential pioneer of early music, Christopher Hogwood

CONTEMPORARY COMPOSERS

78

Richard Whitehouse explores the music of the significant Danish composer Poul Ruders

WHAT NEXT?

92

Where can *Die Fledermaus* lead us? According to Richard Bratby, to Offenbach, Suppé ... even G&S

PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS

122

HIGH FIDELITY

125

NOTES, LETTERS & OBITS

132

NEW RELEASES

134

MY MUSIC

138

Cathy Marston on storytelling via dance and music

**András Schiff
Franz Schubert
Sonatas & Impromptus**

András Schiff: fortepiano

Vier Impromptus D 899, Sonate in c-Moll D 958, Drei Klavierstücke D 946, Sonate in A-Dur D 959

“This is a magnificent, endlessly fascinating pair of discs.” Andrew Clements, The Guardian

“I can’t remember being so spellbound by a performance’s last note...” Geoff Brown, The Times

2-CD 481 7252



**Keith Jarrett
Johann Sebastian Bach
The Well-Tempered Clavier
Book I**

Keith Jarrett: piano

In this live recording from Troy, New York, Keith Jarrett addresses the challenges of Bach’s great set of preludes and fugues once more. Part of the goal is transparency, to bring the listener closer to the composer.

2-CD 481 8016

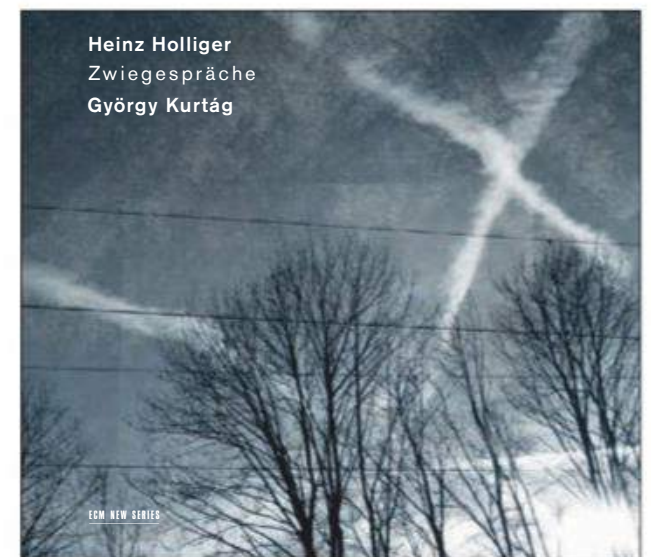
Released on 14 June



**Heinz Holliger
Zwiegespräche
György Kurtág**

Released to mark Holliger’s 80th birthday, this is the perfect embodiment of his dual artistry as performer (on oboe, cor anglais and piano) and composer. The many short pieces of Holliger and Kurtág invite us to listen to every turning nuance, rewarding us with music-making that is at once emphatic and fine-grained.

CD 481 8265



**Reto Bieri & Meta4
Quasi morendo
Brahms, Sciarrino, Pesson**

At the centre of Swiss clarinetist Reto Bieri’s album is a profound interpretation of Johannes Brahms’s Quintet op. 115 with the Finnish string quartet Meta4, bookended by Salvatore Sciarrino’s “Let Me Die Before I Wake” and Gérard Pesson’s “Nebenstück”, a ghostly re-arrangement of Brahms.

CD 481 8082

Distributed and marketed in the UK and Ireland by Proper Music Distribution



**Eleni Karaindrou
Tous des oiseaux**

“This disc twins two recent works: the incidental music for Wajdi Mouadad’s drama ‘Tous des oiseaux’, and a suite curated from Karaindrou’s score for the 2018 Iranian film ‘Bomb – A Love Story’. If ever an album has made me want to re-engage with the output of an artist whom I have perhaps underestimated... It touched me well beyond my expectations.”

Richard Hanlon
MusicWeb International

CD 481 7741



**Anna Gourari
Elusive Affinity**

In this imaginatively shaped and sensitively played album – her third for ECM – Russian pianist Anna Gourari explores musical connections and influences extending across the arts with works by Schnittke, Rihm, Shchedrin, Pärt, Kancheli and Bach arrangements of Vivaldi and Marcello.

CD 481 8131

If your vinyls don't fit in your living room



STREAM AND DOWNLOAD WITH qobuz

Our passion: all music.

Our obsession: high sound quality - CD & Studio.

Selections, digital booklets, exclusive articles.

▶ We are the music lovers.

qobuz.com



GRAMOPHONE *Editor's choice*

Martin Cullingford's pick of the finest recordings from this month's reviews



RECORDING OF THE MONTH



WEINBERG

Symphonies
Nos 2 & 21

CBSO / Mirga
Gražinytė-Tyla
DG

► **DAVID FANNING'S
REVIEW IS ON
PAGE 38**

Last month's issue profiled Birmingham's latest musical star – and this recording offers further proof that in Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla the CBSO and DG have found a very special talent indeed.

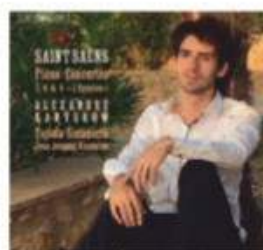


GOUNOD

Symphonies Nos 1 & 2
Iceland Symphony
Orchestra /
Yan Pascal Tortelier
Chandos

These works are rarely recorded – or indeed, performed – which makes this coupling, full of wit, charm and fine playing, all the more valuable.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 44**



SAINT-SAËNS

Piano Concertos Nos 3-5
Alexandre Kantorow *pf*
Tapiola Sinfonietta /
Jean-Jacques Kantorow
BIS

There's tough catalogue competition for these works, but this virtuoso's fabulous performances more than make the case for a new addition.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 48**



BEETHOVEN

Cello Sonatas
Leonard Elschenbroich
vc Alexei Grynyuk *pf*
Onyx

Imaginative and inventive throughout, alive to textural detail, Leonard Elschenbroich and Alexei Grynyuk offer an engaging and beautifully played exploration of these sonatas.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 57**



REICH

'Live at Fondation Louis
Vuitton'
Colin Currie; Steve
Reich; Synergy Vocals;
Colin Currie Group

Colin Currie Records
Colin Currie is at the summit of percussion performance today, and an interpreter of great instinct of the music of Steve Reich.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 61**



JS BACH

'Bach to the Future'
Olivier Latry *org*
La Dolce Volta
Given the devastating
fire in April there's an

added poignancy to this astonishing sonic spectacular from Paris's Notre-Dame, by an organist clearly in love with both the repertoire and the instrument.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 68**



SCHUBERT

Piano Sonatas Nos 19 &
20; Impromptus;
Klavierstücke
Sir Andrés Schiff *pf*
ECM New Series

There's a profound and moving intimacy to these Schubert performances, stemming both from the fortepiano and Andrés Schiff's interpretations themselves.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 72**



CHAUSSON

Poème de l'amour et de
la mer. Symphony
Véronique Gens *sop*
Lille National Orchestra
/ Alexandre Bloch

Alpha
Véronique Gens brings her characteristic poetic elegance to these beautiful performances of Chausson.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 83**



STRAUSS. WAGNER

Four Last Songs, etc
Lise Davidsen *sop*
Philharmonia Orchestra /
Esa-Pekka Salonen
Decca

When we named Lise Davidsen our Young Artist of the Year we praised her already rich soprano voice: this programme feels perfectly chosen for her Decca debut.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 87**

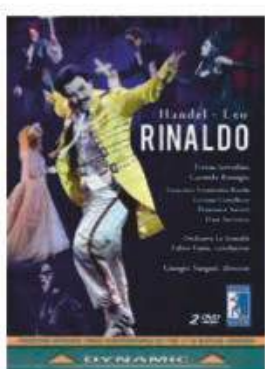


'AN ENGLISH CORONATION, 1902-1953'

Gabrieli Consort &
Players / Paul McCreesh
Signum

A fascinating project, which brilliantly showcases the sort of thing the English choral tradition does best: stirring music performed with a great sense of occasion.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 89**



DVD/BLU-RAY

HANDEL/LEO Rinaldo
Sols; Orchestra La Scintilla / Fabio Luisi
Dynamic

Handel's *Rinaldo* – though not as we know it. This film of a Neapolitan reworking is an intriguing and fascinating addition to the opera catalogue.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 97**



REISSUE/ARCHIVE

'TOSCANINI
CONDUCTS RICHARD
STRAUSS'

NBC SO / Toscanini *pf*
Pristine Audio

A new transfer of fine Strauss performances from Toscanini, courtesy of Pristine Audio.

► **REVIEW ON PAGE 110**



Listen to many of
the Editor's Choice
recordings online at
qobuz.com

FOR THE RECORD

Aurora conductor takes over Finnish Radio SO

Nicholas Collon, Principal Conductor of the Aurora Orchestra, has been named the new Chief Conductor of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra. He will become the first non-Finn to hold the post.

Collon's three-year deal – with an additional two-year option – will begin in autumn 2021, and he will be with the orchestra for a minimum of 10 weeks every season.

Aurora – the chamber orchestra which Collon co-founded with Robin Ticciati in 2004 – has become famed for its eclectic repertoire, innovative approach to performance, and a commitment to contemporary music. Consequently, the young conductor has already developed a diverse and growing discography, including appearing on such albums as the music of Finzi on Decca, a John Adams programme on Warner Classics, and an Augusta Read Thomas survey on



Innovative: Nicholas Collon

Nimbus. He also has positions with the Residentie Orkest, The Hague, and with the Gürzenich Orchestra, Cologne.

Of his appointment, Collon says: 'I look forward to sharing in the FRSO's amazing musical culture, from the music of Sibelius and his modern Finnish counterparts, to the musicians' astonishing professionalism, skill and thirst for experimentation when tackling all shapes and sizes of challenging repertoire. Together, I hope we can build on this enviable position, and continue to expand the orchestra's horizons, lighting a beacon for what a 21st-century symphony orchestra can and should be.'

Collon will succeed Hannu Lintu who has been the FRSO's Chief Conductor since 2013, and who conducted the orchestra in the recent *Gramophone* Concerto Award-winning account of Bartók's Violin Concertos with Christian Tetzlaff for Ondine.

Vänskä moves to the Seoul Philharmonic



Osmo Vänskä will become the new Music Director of the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra next year. As reported in our January issue, the Finnish conductor will step down from his current post as

Music Director of the Minnesota Orchestra when his contract expires in 2022. His recording of Sibelius's Symphonies Nos 3, 6 and 7 with the American ensemble was shortlisted for a *Gramophone* Award in 2017, while he has also recorded a well-received Beethoven symphony cycle with them for BIS. Vänskä was also an acclaimed chief conductor of the Lahti Symphony Orchestra for two decades, winning *Gramophone* Awards for recordings of Sibelius's music, including the Violin Concerto (with Leonidas Kavakos, 1991), the Fifth Symphony and *En Saga* (1996), and a programme of orchestral works called 'Rondo of the Waves' (2003).

The previous Music Director of the Seoul Philharmonic, Myung-Whun Chung, left in 2015, and the orchestra appointed both Markus Stenz as Conductor-in-Residence and Thierry Fischer as Principal Guest Conductor in 2017.

Igor Levit's Beethoven plans

Igor Levit is to release a set of the complete Beethoven piano sonatas in September, ahead of the 250th anniversary of the composer's birth next year. Levit, who won *Gramophone*'s Recording of the Year Award in 2016 for his Sony Classical album of variations by Bach, Beethoven and Frederic Rzewski, and who was shortlisted in the Instrumental category in 2013 for his set of the last three Beethoven sonatas ('a debut of true significance. Everywhere you turn, you encounter thoughtfulness, an utter engagement with the composer and a clear sense of Levit's personality' wrote Harriet Smith in *Gramophone*), recorded the cycle after performing them in concert. Igor Levit, says: 'For me, this recording is a conclusion of my past 15 years. The literally life-changing encounter with the *Diabelli* Variations at the age of 17, which is effectively still ongoing, the daily engagement with Beethoven's sonatas, with Beethoven as a person, with myself, with the world in which I live – all that has also led to this recording.'



BBC Proms 2019 season revealed

The BBC Proms has announced its 2019 season, featuring key themes including marking 150 years since the birth of Proms founder Sir Henry Wood (33 works that Wood introduced at the Proms are being reprised, with another 33 new commissions receiving their first performances), and 50 years since the Apollo 11 moon landing.

As always, some of today's most revered artists and ensembles will take to the Royal Albert Hall stage throughout the eight weeks of events, including, this year, the Vienna Philharmonic under Bernard Haitink (with Murray Perahia in Beethoven), the Bavarian RSO under Mariss Jansons, Sir John Eliot Gardiner and the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique (in a complete performance of Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini*), the Gewandhaus Orchestra and Andris Nelsons, and the Orchestre de Paris and Daniel Harding. There will also be guest appearances by Martha Argerich, Daniel Barenboim, Joyce DiDonato and Sir Antonio Pappano as well as the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra under Long Yu. You can hear an interview with BBC Proms' Director David Pickard in the *Gramophone* Podcast.

Major labels sign up two young pianists

The month saw two signings of young pianists by major labels. The first was Isata Kanneh-Mason, who joined Decca Classics – thus also joining her brother, cellist Sheku, on the label – and will begin the partnership with an album devoted to the music of Clara Schumann. The release, marking the composer's 200th anniversary, will be released in July. As well as the Piano Concerto (recorded with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic under the New Zealander Holly Mathieson) the album contains solo piano works, including the G minor Piano Sonata, and the three Romances for violin and piano, Op 22, for which Isata is joined by the former BBC New Generation Artist Elena Urioste.

The second signing comes from Warner Classics, which has added Mariam Batsashvili to its prestigious roster of pianists. The young Georgian-born artist will make her label debut with a solo



Signed: Isata Kanneh-Mason and Mariam Batsashvili

album of Liszt and Chopin, due for release in August 2019.

Liszt has been a significant composer in her career to date: Batsashvili won the 10th Franz

Liszt Piano Competition in Utrecht in 2014, having already triumphed in the International Franz Liszt Competition for Young Pianists in Weimar three years earlier. 'Franz Liszt definitely has a special place in my life,' she said. 'His music is so complete, so perfect ... Every single emotion and thought about life can be found in his music. He is very daring in the way he uses the entire piano to express himself.'

In 2015 Batsashvili received the Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli Prize and she spent the 2016-17 season as a 'Rising Star' of the European Concert Hall Organisation (ECHO). She is currently a member of the BBC's New Generation Artist scheme.

ONE TO WATCH

Nicolas Namoradze Pianist

The Georgian pianist Nicolas Namoradze, the winner of the 2018 Honens International Piano Competition in Calgary, has already impressed pianists of rare knowledge and experience. Like the two Honens winners before him (Pavel Kolesnikov in 2012 and Luca Buratto in 2015), Namoradze will make his debut recording for Hyperion. In July he goes into the studio to record music by York Bowen – a composer in whose revival the label has played a significant role – including the 12 Studies, Op 46 and *Fragments from Hans Anderson*. The album, hardly a conventional calling-card for a young pianist, will include numerous first recordings and suggests an artist willing to explore interesting areas of repertoire.

That sense of exploration may partly stem from Namoradze's work as a composer. As well as studying the piano with Emanuel Ax, he studied composition with John Corigliano, and at the semi-final stage at Honens, having played Bach's Partita No 6 and Schumann's *Humoreske*, he played three of his own Études – an unusual choice



in a piano competition. Evidence from the competition (available on YouTube) reveals an inventive musician teeming with ideas. It will be interesting to see what he makes of York Bowen's music, and where his inquiring spirit takes him next.

GRAMOPHONE Online

The magazine is just the beginning. Visit gramophone.co.uk for ...

Podcasts

Subscribe to the *Gramophone* podcast to enjoy weekly interviews with leading classical recording artists. Recent instalments feature saxophonist Amy Dickson who talks to Editor Martin Cullingford about her latest album, which evokes the deserts of Australia, the rolling countryside of Southern England, and the Scottish Highlands as conjured up by Sir James MacMillan in a concerto



Amy Dickson joins the Gramophone Podcast

written especially for Dickson. James Jolly meets tenor Michael Fabiano to explore the connections between the music of Verdi and Donizetti. And Andrew Nethsingha talks about 'Locus Iste' – his new recording with St John's College Choir, Cambridge, which celebrates the 150th anniversary of the consecration of the College's chapel and also happens to be the choir's 100th recording.

Facebook, Twitter & Instagram

Join our ever-growing community of classical music devotees on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to discuss music and discover great new recordings.

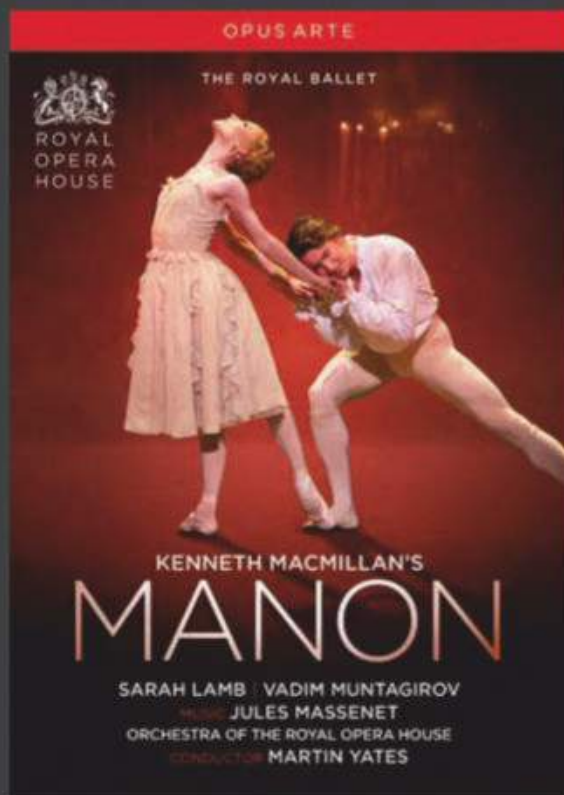
ON DVD AND BLU-RAY

OA1286D (DVD) | OAABD7256D (Blu-ray)



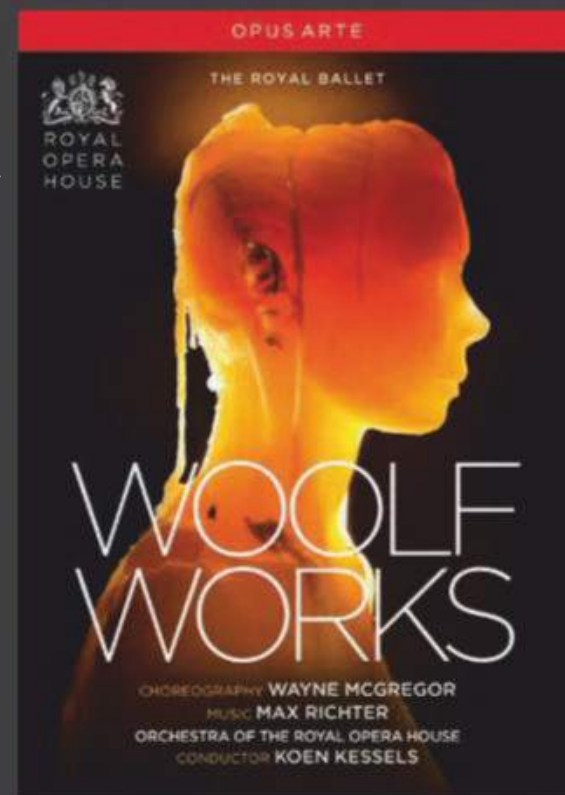
“What a magnificent achievement this is”
★★★★★ The Times

OA1285D (DVD) | OAABD7255D (Blu-ray)



★★★★★ The Financial Times
★★★★★ The Daily Express
★★★★★ The Telegraph

OA1282D (DVD) | OAABD7247D (Blu-ray)



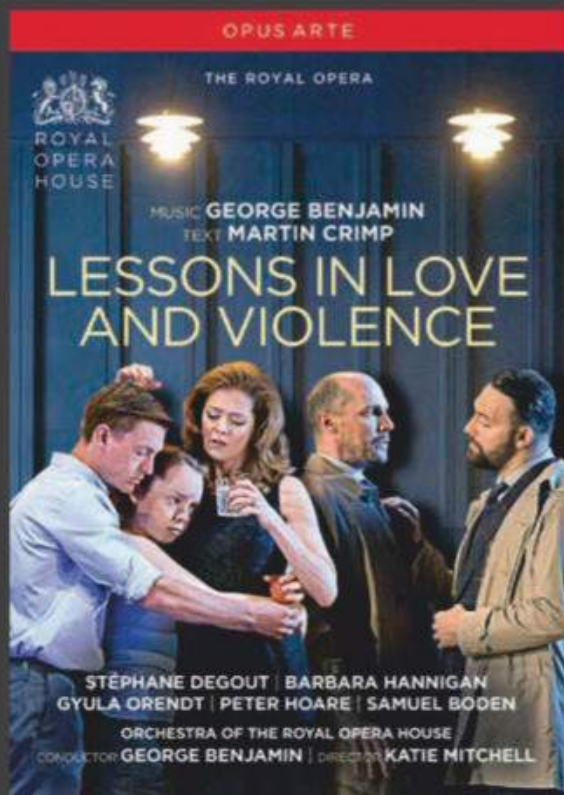
“Nothing short of a triumph”
★★★★★ The Guardian
Best New Dance Production
2016 Olivier Awards

OA1284D (DVD) | OAABD7254D (Blu-ray)



“...the ballet event of the year”
★★★★★ The Daily Express

OA1221D (DVD) | OAABD7199D (Blu-ray)



A “significant contribution to the art form”
The New York Times

OA1289D (DVD) | OAABD7258D (Blu-ray)



★★★★ The Independent
★★★★ The Guardian
★★★★ The Stage

ARTISTS & *their* INSTRUMENTS

William Barton on his first didgeridoo, made from the branch of a coolabah tree

“The didgeridoo is part of a strong cultural heritage, coming as it does from the bush, from the Australian landscape. It’s made from the branch of a tree that has been hollowed out by termites, but it ends up becoming an extension of your voice and your body.

The sound of the didgeridoo is affected by the tree’s quality (which is, in turn, determined by what part of Australia it’s growing in), and the thickness, length and diameter of the wood (the last two factors influence the pitch). How it is cut from the branch also has a bearing, in terms of how easy it is to play fast rhythms and quick articulations. For example, it may have a narrow mouthpiece but flare out at the bottom, rather like an alpine horn, which gives it a fast wind tunnel. So really, there are endless possibilities for this instrument.

I grew up near Queensland in a place of rugged beauty. From the age of seven, I learnt to play on my uncle’s instrument – a C sharp didgeridoo made out of the coolabah tree. It was my uncle who taught me the foundations – I was his very last student, and he passed away when I was 11. He was a very special man, a medicine man, and the traditional elder law dictated that his instrument should be buried with him. But instead, his tribe gave it to me. It was a very powerful gesture, and I still play the instrument to this day.

It’s about 1.2 metres long and has this wonderful resonance. Because of its size, it sort of forced me to expand my lung capacity at an early age, to have a purist’s control over my technical ability. Today, even though I have over 30 didgeridoos, I’d know that instrument immediately, even blindfolded. Its tonal spectrum, its width and diameter, how it fills with sound ... these qualities are instantly recognisable. The instrument has a certain spirit, the memory of landscape, that I connect with when I’m playing it. Its earthy guttural sounds, which I explore in *Kalkadunga Yurdu*,



With his first didgeridoo (top), and recording ‘In Circles’

the piece I wrote when I was 15, come from my heart, my parents, my extended family ... this is how I connect with my audience, as a storyteller of the next generation.

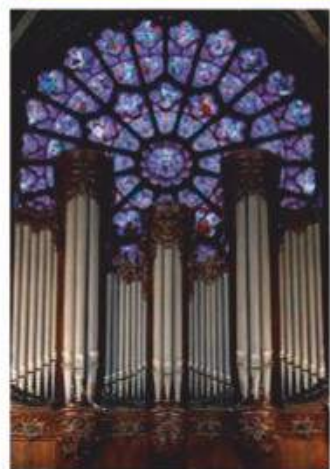
Didgeridoos are meant to be played on the ground, or on horseback, but they’re not designed to travel on planes – there’s a danger that, because of the temperature changes, they’ll split. So I tend to travel with a modern didgeridoo that has been made to suit a particular purpose, one that’s in the same key as the piece I’ll be performing, and that’s more sturdy and less prone to cracking. This also avoids having to take a didgeridoo that’s so long it sticks out of your bag. I used to make my own instruments but nowadays there are some considerably skilled makers, many of them non-indigenous who have been out in the bush to learn in the right way. So you can

say to your instrument maker, ‘I want one in E’ or ‘I want to be able to blow F and C overtones’ and they’ll do it. I’ve even played on a prototype of a keyed instrument. It looks like a bassoon and it’s really great – you can change the fundamental drone note, which makes it easy to work out chordal changes.

I believe that the didgeridoo is both a harmonic and rhythmic instrument, and can transcend different genres of music, from classical, to dance music like Basement Jaxx, who I’ve been touring with. Growing up I listened to everything – Bach, heavy metal, rock’n’ roll, jazz – and this allowed me to develop very organically as a player, in terms of style and tone. For me, it’s important to know about the technical nuances of my instrument so that I can expand upon its traditions by collaborating with musicians from other walks of life. I had long wanted to take Australia’s oldest culture to a Western European, classical music world and create a unified language, so when I performed Peter Sculthorpe’s *Earth Cry* with the LPO at the Royal Festival Hall in 2005, that was a big tick in the box for me.

Last year I had a few commissions and was also recording ‘In Circles’ with saxophonist Amy Dickson, which includes *Kalkadunga Yurdu* and another work by Sculthorpe. This year, I’m happy to be back on the road. I love interacting with people and exchanging didgeridoos – I’ve given them away, traded them, been given them by people who’d had them as family heirlooms ... If I can’t find the tribe, the rightful owners, then I’ll look after it – it’s not my place to get rid of it.”

William Barton appears on Amy Dickson’s ‘In Circles’ on Sony Classical, reviewed on page 52. His new solo album is due for release in September; for more information about this, plus details of future projects, visit williambarton.com.au



Notre-Dame’s historic organ

Notre-Dame’s organ

According to reports, the 8000-pipe Cavaillé-Coll organ of Notre-Dame in Paris – which can be heard on a new Editor’s Choice-winning album by Olivier Latry – largely survived the recent devastating fire at the Cathedral.

CBSO centenary plans

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra has revealed plans for its centenary season, 2019-20: celebrations will include 20 commissions, including a cello concerto by Julian Anderson and a symphony by

Thomas Adès, plus a new book on the orchestra’s history by *Gramophone* critic Richard Bratby.

Harmony in Mind

Gramophone sister title *Classical Music* has launched its Harmony in Mind campaign to address mental health issues affecting the classical music industry. Editor Lucy Thraves hopes it can help ‘foster an environment where people feel safe, supported and accepted’ and ‘promote a healthier atmosphere in the classical music profession.’ See harmonyinmind.co.uk

7 July
The Bridgewater Hall

THE ANVIL

AN ELEGY FOR PETERLOO

A major new work
Composed by **Emily Howard**
Libretto by **Michael Symmons Roberts**
Performed by the **BBC Philharmonic**,
the **BBC Singers** and the **Hallé choirs**

Commissioned by Manchester International Festival, the BBC Philharmonic and BBC Radio 3.
Produced by Manchester International Festival and the BBC Philharmonic. Photo: Manuel Streit

11 July
The Bridgewater Hall

THE HALLÉ LENNING GERARD

Shostakovich's Symphony No.7
Conducted by Sir Mark Elder

Produced by Manchester International Festival and the Hallé.
Image: Deutsche Fotothek

15–20 July
Royal Exchange Theatre

TAO OF GLASS

PHILIP GLASS
& PHELM
MCDERMOTT

Commissioned by Manchester International Festival, Improbable, Perth Festival, Ruhrfestspiele Recklinghausen and Carolina Performing Arts – University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Produced by Manchester International Festival, Improbable and the Royal Exchange Theatre. Photo: Christian Sturm

MIF Manchester International Festival 2019
MIF Manchester International Festival 2019
MIF Manchester International Festival 2019
MIF Manchester International Festival 2019
MIF Manchester International Festival 2019

4 – 21 July

mif.co.uk

bruntwood

MAG Manchester Airport

NCP

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

BBC

The Guardian

Manchester Evening News

GRAMOPHONE GUIDE TO ... *Serenade*

David Threasher traces an evolution from the balcony to the concert hall

A lovelorn youth, perhaps with a guitar, but certainly with a song in his heart. A balcony. A fervent wish to entice the object of his desire from her boudoir, however briefly. That's the archetype of the serenade, and it's one that translated to the opera stage most famously in *Don Giovanni*, as the luckless libertine attempts his seduction of Elvira's maid.

The nocturnal implications of the term gave rise in the late 16th century to the serenata, a sort of solo cantata sung outside by artificial light, but also transferred in the 17th century to the instrumental sphere, originally signifying a musical greeting performed in the open air at evening-time. By the 18th century it had become a catch-all term for a piece in one or more movements, usually of a light character. Serenades came after divertimentos and before nocturnos – their place in the evening's entertainment was at about 9pm, while the nocturne was heard at 11.

Such timetabling was only loosely adhered to, of course, and the term migrated from works with plucked accompaniments – mimicking the serenader's guitar, as does Schubert's famous example, 'Ständchen', from *Schwanengesang* – to multi-movement works combining aspects of march, symphony and concerto. Mozart contributed generously to the Salzburg tradition, joining his father and their colleague Michael Haydn in composing a collection of such works for particular events or noble families. He continued in his Viennese maturity to compose a series of richly scored woodwind treats, the greatest of which is the



'Oh, come to your window, my lovely': Don Giovanni serenades with his mandolin

Gran Partita for no fewer than 12 wind players and double bass. Later works include the strings-only *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*.

In the 19th century the serenade moved indoors and came to signify, most usually, an orchestral work that did not aspire to the loftiness of the symphony. Brahms's two serenades enabled him to stretch his orchestral muscles without engaging with the Beethovenian example that so intimidated him. Strings-only serenades flowed from the likes of Dvořák, Suk, Tchaikovsky and Elgar, while Dvořák and the young Richard Strauss composed serenades for wind ensembles.

Sibelius's two serenades (1912-13) are for violin and orchestra, an example followed by Leonard Bernstein in his *Serenade after Plato's Symposium* (1954). Other important 20th-century serenades include one for piano by Stravinsky (1925), composed so that each of its four movements would fit on one side of a 78rpm record. Britten's *Serenade* (1943) sets nocturnal poetry for tenor, with the inclusion of a virtuoso horn part composed for Dennis Brain. In perhaps the most beautiful example of all, Vaughan Williams set words from *The Merchant of Venice* in his *Serenade to Music* (1938) for 16 of the finest singers of the day. **G**

► Listen to our Serenade playlist on Qobuz

IN THE STUDIO

● **Marc-André Hamelin** has been in the Teldex studios in Berlin recording opera paraphrases by Liszt (including those on Bellini's *Norma* and Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, as well as the collaborative *Hexaméron*) and Thalberg (including *Don Pasquale* and *Moses*) for Hyperion. This is music that has long been in Hamelin's repertoire, and the prospect of hearing it on record will whet the appetites of piano-lovers everywhere. Look out for it in the spring of 2020.

● Also for Hyperion, the **Takács Quartet** and pianist **Garrick Ohlsson** have been in the studio at Wyastone Estate in the Wye valley to record piano quintets by Elgar and Amy Beach. Elgar's Quintet was part of the late flowering of chamber music he composed towards the end of the First World War, while the Beach was composed a decade earlier and is a relative rarity – this recording should further consolidate her growing stature. The disc will be out early next year.

● German cellist **Jan Vogler** was in New York in March recording a programme of Spanish and South American music with guitarist Ismo Eskelinen for Sony Classical. At the Lethe Lounge, the duo focused on repertoire by Paganini, de Falla, Piazzolla, Ravel (*Pièce en*

forme de habanera) and Satie (*Gymnopédie No 1*, arranged by Vogler). The release is set for next month.

● **Bach Collegium Japan** were at Saitama Arts Theater in Japan in April, recording Bach's *St Matthew Passion* for BIS. Featuring soloists including Makoto Sakurada, Carolyn Sampson, Damien Guillon and Christian Immler, the recording is due out later this year.

● The **Chapel Choir of Benenden School** already have their sights set on Christmas. They were at Cranbrook Church and Tonbridge School Chapel in March to record seasonal music by Bob Chilcott, Sarah Quartel and David Bednall, for release this autumn on Regent Records.

● **Steven Devine** is travelling to Malton, North Yorkshire, at the end of May to record Book 2 of Bach's *The Well-Tempered Clavier* for Resonus Classics. The album will be released in the spring of next year.

● The brass septet **Septura** are off to St Jude's Church, Hampstead Garden Suburb, at the end of May to record an unusual version of *The Nutcracker*. The arrangement of Tchaikovsky's ballet by Simon Cox and Matthew Knight will be released on Naxos in November.

ORCHESTRA *Insight ...*

Cleveland Orchestra

Our monthly series telling the story behind an orchestra

Founded 1918

Home Severance Hall

Music Director Franz Welser-Möst (since 2002)

Founding Music Director Nikolai Sokoloff

As the youngest of America's 'big five' symphony orchestras, the Cleveland Orchestra was also for many years the least respected. That changed in 1946, when George Szell succeeded Erich Leinsdorf as Music Director and initiated one of the greatest conductor-orchestra partnerships of all time. Szell remained in the post for a quarter of a century, but the effects of his intense stewardship were felt long thereafter. 'When we do an outstanding concert abroad, George Szell gets a good review,' observed one of the orchestra's subsequent directors Christoph von Dohnányi as late as 1990.

Szell took clear practical steps when he arrived at the imposing Severance Hall, which was only 15 years old at the time. He hired the acoustician Heinrich Keilholz, fresh from an overhaul of the Vienna State Opera, to add a full second of reverberation time to the hall's sound. He replaced two-dozen musicians. He then started work on the orchestra's famous focus of precision by encouraging an extremely literal reading of the score. A heavy recording schedule for CBS documented the 'Szell sound' with its combination of presence, flawlessness and self-discipline.

Some claimed the results were over-groomed and passionless (for a good defence of that accusation, see Michael McManus's Icons, 4/15). Against many of the cavalier recordings of the era, they now sound delectable. The year before Pierre Boulez took over from Szell in 1970, *Gramophone* asserted that, on the evidence of the French conductor's accounts of works by Debussy, Cleveland now had 'the finest orchestral instrument in the United States'.



Szell's insistence on accuracy evolved, through his successors, into something better described as delicacy. During his own extensive tenure (1984-2002), Dohnányi spoke to *Gramophone* about increasing the orchestra's rhythmic and dynamic flexibility. Listen to Szell's recording of orchestral excerpts from Berlioz's *La damnation de Faust*, or consider his commissioning and premiering of Dutilleux's *Métaboles*, and one might conclude those characteristics were simply lying dormant.

Music Directors tend to stick around in Cleveland, like Franz Welser-Möst, who arrived in 2002 and won't be leaving until 2022 at the earliest. He has taken the orchestra through Bruckner and Brahms on DVD and the ensemble now prides itself on its historically informed approach to Baroque music in particular. But its most recent series on a major label has been Mozart concertos for Decca, directed from the piano by Mitsuko Uchida. There are few better demonstrations than these of the orchestra's ability to play quietly and beautifully yet with colour and character than these.

Can Szell take some credit?

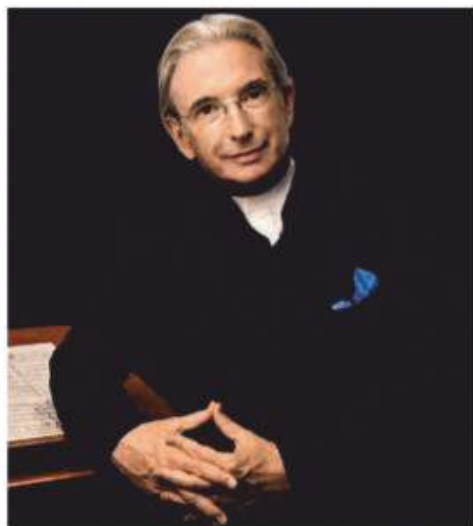
Andrew Mellor

► Listen to our special playlist on Qobuz



Medici treats

This month, in 'Gramophone Selects', Michel Tilson Thomas and Yuja Wang join the young musicians of the New World Symphony at Carnegie Hall for a thrilling concert of Julia Wolfe (look out for our Contemporary Composer feature on her next issue), Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto and Berlioz. Catch Wang 10 years earlier in Prokofiev's Third Concerto with Abbado at Lucerne, and compare that with Denis Matsuev in the same work from Verbier - two huge techniques, two different approaches. As another International Tchaikovsky Competition unfolds this month, there's a reminder of the terrific cellist Andrei Ioniță in Tchaikovsky's *Rococo*



Michael Tilson Thomas conducts Wolfe

Variations, plus you can watch Joyce DiDonato's latest masterclasses at Carnegie Hall. Visit medici.tv and search for 'Gramophone Selects'.

Handel vocal prize-winner revealed

This year's Handel Singing Competition has been won by Eszter Balogh. The jury awarded the prize following her performance in the final round with the London Handel Orchestra, conducted by Laurence Cummings. Launched in 2002, the competition boasts some impressive past finalists including Iestyn Davies, Lucy Crowe, Grace Davidson and Tim Mead.

ROH lose hearing damage appeal

The Royal Opera House has lost its appeal over the case brought against it by viola player Chris Goldscheider following acoustic shock sustained during a rehearsal of *Die Walküre* in 2012, when he was seated in front of the brass section; the damage to his hearing has left him unable to work as a musician.

FROM WHERE I SIT

Why does the music of some composers travel less well than others, asks Edward Seckerson




There is an undeniable thrill in hearing special talent from other cultures embrace our music as their own.

A few nights ago I had the pleasure of hearing Vassily Petrenko power the London Philharmonic through the incendiary pages of Walton's First

Symphony – a work that I have grown to admire and love beyond reason over the years. It is without question a total masterpiece, a work full of incident, surprise, febrile excitement, and beauty – probably the best thing Walton ever wrote and frankly was ever going to write. And even that belated finale – arrived at after the deadline for the first performance had passed (necessitating a three-movement premiere) – takes us to a new place. It's a place called home, a place where this very 'international' symphony becomes, in my view, fiercely nationalistic, even Shakesperian, in its triumphalism. Some find it unsatisfactory, unearned. Not me. And not Petrenko who arrived at the flaring double-timpani entry like a man possessed and who carried us through to the 'Cry God for Harry' ending with its bells-raised horn fanfares like Leningrad was a very long way away.

Now I know that music is an international language – one that crosses all social, cultural and political divides – but there is a very particular musical syntax which gives it its specific national identity and accent – and conductors as perceptive as Petrenko instinctively pick up on this. A few years back I saw him stand in at short notice to conduct the London Symphony Orchestra in Elgar's First Symphony – a piece to which he had only recently come – and whilst he had already been dubbed an honorary scouser in the city of Liverpool where the Philharmonic had their sights on a long relationship, his understanding of what made Elgar Elgar was quite uncanny. He has, of course, gone on to explore, and record, this composer extensively and has doubtless taken his music to Russia and beyond. But my point is this: why do some composers travel less well than others, why for all the advocacy of major conductors – and in Elgar or Walton or even Vaughan Williams's case that would include names outside of the English establishment like Barenboim, Previn, Slatkin, Solti – do they not take root in the core repertoire away from these shores?

There is no easy answer. But you still have to ask why pieces as great as Walton's First or the Elgar symphonies aren't as central to the international repertoire as they might be. Elgar's stiff-upper-lip-pomp-and-circumstance image has sometimes been cited but as Simon Rattle once said to me, behind that exterior seethes a passionate and troubled spirit. I think his line was: 'If he'd been born in Austria he'd have been called Mahler.'

Which brings to mind an exchange I had with Daniel Barenboim just after the fall of the Berlin wall. His exasperation trying to persuade the Berlin Philharmonic to play the Elgar symphonies had led him to try Elgar's *Falstaff* instead. When asked by one of the players what it was like, he replied 'It's a kind of English *Till Eulenspiegel*'. But after the concert, approaching one of the bass players, he asked what he thought. The answer: 'Well, if we must, then Mahler.' Asked and answered. 

NEW ON ONDINE

After an array of award-winning recordings on Ondine, pianist Lars Vogt releases an album of Mozart Piano Sonatas. Vogt's previous recording was hailed for "marvellous performances" of the Beethoven Piano Concertos, Nos 2 & 4, and awarded an Editor's Choice. ODE 1318-2



This new album includes world premiere recordings of three works by Saariaho, featuring bass-baritone Gerald Finley and harpist Xavier de Maistre as soloists. ODE 1316-2



An awe-inspiring recording of Tchaikovsky's sacred vocal works by the outstanding Latvian Radio Choir under their director Sigvards Klava, now available from Ondine. ODE 1336-2

RELEASE DATE 14th JUNE

ONDINE
www.ondine.net

Distributed exclusively in the UK by Select Music and in North America by Naxos of America.



Celebrating PAVAROTTI'S GENIUS

*Six roles he made his own,
and the story of his 1991
recording of Verdi's Otello*



Sutherland and Pavarotti at Covent Garden in 1966

Tonio – LA FILLE DU RÉGIMENT

Richard Lawrence recalls the early appearances of Pavarotti at Covent Garden and the role that unleashed the 'King of the High Cs'

Luciano Pavarotti made his debut at Covent Garden in September 1963 when he stepped in at short notice to replace Giuseppe di Stefano in a run of performances of *La bohème*. He returned in May 1965 for *La sonnambula*, paired with Joan Sutherland, with whom he toured Australia the same year. In between, aged 28, he sang Idamante in *Idomeneo* at Glyndebourne under John Pritchard. I saw that production but, concentrating at the time on Richard Lewis and Gundula Janowitz, I fear I have no memory of Pavarotti's performance; a recording of the Proms broadcast (August 17, 1964) reveals a sensitive account of the role, with a beautiful dying-away in 'Il padre adorato'. (It was Jani Strasser at Glyndebourne, he said, who taught him to sing *piano*.) He later recorded the part of Idomeneo with Pritchard, and on DVD from the Met with James Levine.

So far as I know, Pavarotti didn't sing any other Mozart roles. His reputation rests almost entirely on his interpretations of Verdi and Puccini. But it was his appearance as Tonio in *La fille du régiment* at Covent Garden in June 1966, which I do remember, that caused a sensation. The studio recording was made in July 1967, following a revival of the stage production. It has to be said that French pronunciation is not Pavarotti's strong point. Like many of his compatriots he has trouble with final 'e's and words such as 'destin'. Never mind: what makes the set so joyous is the interplay, especially between Tonio, Marie and Sulpice, clearly derived from weeks of experience on stage. One could imagine the trio 'Tous les trois réunis' going with a little more fizz under another conductor, but Pavarotti, Sutherland and Spiro Malas have the right lightness of touch.

It's not all lightness, of course. Sutherland is heartfelt in 'Il faut partir', with its cor anglais obbligato, when she has to leave Tonio and her regimental 'fathers'. Tonio has his serious side, too: when avowing his love for Marie and, at the end, pleading with her 'aunt', Pavarotti delivers exquisite

The director Ron Howard has turned his attention to one of the biggest stars of classical music, Luciano Pavarotti. Following on from his hugely successful documentary on The Beatles, *Eight Days a Week – The Touring Years*, Howard's new film, *Pavarotti: Genius Is Forever*, explores the magic, as well as the graft, that made the Italian tenor a household name. Made by CBS Films, Imagine Entertainment and White Horse Pictures, in association with Polygram Entertainment (a partner of Universal Music Group, whose Decca label owns Pavarotti's extensive recorded catalogue), the documentary is released in the US on June 7 and in the UK and Ireland on July 13.

Almost 12 years on from Pavarotti's death at the age of 71, Howard has talked to many of the musicians with whom the tenor performed, from Bono to Plácido Domingo, as well as to his family and the people who helped market and sell over a hundred million of his records, of which the one with the highest profile was the Three Tenors concert recorded live in Rome in 1990.

To tie in with the release of the film, *Gramophone* looks back at six of Pavarotti's greatest stage roles as chosen by our critics, and the former Decca producer Michael Haas recalls the high-stakes recording sessions in Chicago and New York when Pavarotti took on one of the greatest operatic challenges of his career: Verdi's *Otello*, recorded alongside Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and Leo Nucci under the baton of Sir Georg Solti.

diminuendos – was he thinking of Jani Strasser? – at ‘je vous aime’ and ‘cesser de vivre’.

Tonio’s ‘Ah! mes amis’ is famous for its string of top Cs: eight in a row and a ninth at the cadence. (Decca was to issue a Pavarotti recital called ‘King of the High Cs’.) Pavarotti belts them out fearlessly, holding the last one for a good six seconds. My recollection of him in 1966 is of this clean-shaven, relatively

slim 30-year-old visibly quivering – vibrating, even – as he hit each one. The audience loved it, and so did I.

THE RECORDING

Donizetti: *La fille du régiment* *Sols incl* Joan Sutherland, Spiro Malas, Monica Sinclair; Chorus and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House / Richard Bonyng Decca (11/68)

Riccardo – UN BALLO IN MASCHERA

The sheer beauty of Pavarotti’s voice frequently made up for occasional shortcomings in other areas, as **Hugo Shirley** notes in this early recording of a role that the tenor would come to define

I’m too young to have caught Pavarotti in his prime, and was too impecunious – or slow on the uptake – to have grabbed a ticket for his final Cavaradossi in London. My encounters with him have therefore, alas, been confined to records. But before I’d encountered his recordings of *L’elisir d’amore*, *Rigoletto*, *La bohème* or any other of his more mainstream signature roles, I’d discovered him in Bruno Bartoletti’s 1971 recording of Verdi’s enigmatic middle-period masterpiece, *Un ballo in maschera*.

He was joined in the cast by Renata Tebaldi (tackling Amelia too late), and an equally youthful Sherill Milnes. But I had ears only for Pavarotti’s contributions. In Riccardo, the opera’s ardent, carefree – and somewhat careless protagonist – he seemed to find an ideal role: his golden tone, the smile in the sound and his apparently effortless, tireless way of spinning a phrase defined (and still does to an extent) what this role should sound like for me.

He would record it again in the ’80s with Solti, and Orfeo recently released a live recording from 1986 of him singing *Ballo* in Vienna – a glorious display of open-throated vocal ardour in a role that had by then turned out to be something of a calling card. But this recording, made in June 1970 but

released in 1971, retains its special freshness. It’s there right from his first entrance, through an exquisitely spun ‘Forse la soglia attinse’ and ‘Ma se m’è forza perderti’ (and listen to him pour voice and soul into the theme’s return in the following ensemble) to a final scene that, though hardly representing vocal-acting for the ages, is nevertheless touching.

There’s probably a handful of *Ballo* recordings that one would recommend ahead of this, and – however reluctantly – I have to admit that Andrew Porter was onto something when he soberly noted that Pavarotti was only really scratching the surface of this complex role (and his characterisation would deepen over the years). But I’m still happy to abandon sobriety regularly to drink up these golden tones: rarely on disc, it seems to me, has this most instinctive – and instinctively communicative – tenor been captured on such joyously irresistible form.



Pavarotti and Anna Tomowa-Sintow in 1984



THE RECORDING

Verdi *Un ballo in maschera* *Sols incl* Sherrill Milnes, Renata Tebaldi, Regina Resnik, Helen Donath; Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia / Bruno Bartoletti Decca (4/71)

Nemorino – L’ELISIR D’AMORE

Pavarotti could be an impressive comic actor, and nowhere is this more apparent than in his portrayal of country bumpkin Nemorino in this classic recording from 1970, finds **Mark Pullinger**

Pavarotti’s acting skills were often dismissed, but he could actually do comedy very well. Even in a serious role such as Cavaradossi, the way he teased Tosca in Act 1 always had a knowing smile. But his finest comic role was undoubtedly Nemorino, the country bumpkin in *L’elisir d’amore*, smitten with Adina. His first – and finest – recording of the role was in 1970 for Decca, with Richard Bonyng opening up all the cuts.

From his first entry, ‘Quanto è bella’, you can’t help but fall for Pavarotti’s lovestruck Nemorino; the open voice, the bright, forward sound and boyish charm have the quality of aural sunshine as he sings Adina’s praises.

The scene where the quack Doctor Dulcamara sells him an elixir – in reality a bottle of cheap Bordeaux – is delicious. Video footage from the Met shows Pavarotti’s eyes twinkling with delight as he takes a swig, swiftly slipping under the influence.

For a big man, he could be light on his feet, acting the drunk amusingly (this even comes across on disc). When Adina spots a change in his behaviour, Nemorino, determined not to play his hand too soon, sings the line 'De miei sospiri non si stanchi per ora' – 'Let her not tire of my sighs yet' – and it's melting.

But the big test for any Nemorino is the hit tenor aria, 'Una furtiva lagrima'. This is big, open-hearted singing, Pavarotti (and Bonyngé) resisting the temptation to over-sentimentalise it ... this is Donizetti after all, not Puccini. The bassoon solo is beautifully turned and Pavarotti's golden phrasing is a joy.



Pavarotti as Nemorino, with the magical elixir

His Adina is Joan Sutherland, his regular *bel canto* partner on disc from whom he learnt much about breath control early in his career when he accompanied her and Bonyngé on a tour of Australia. Although she's a touch severe – Sutherland hadn't sung the role on stage by the time of the recording – their duets are treasurable. Spiro Malas relishes the role of the duplicitous doctor, but it's Pavarotti who steals the show.

THE RECORDING

Donizetti *L'elisir d'amore*
Sols incl Joan Sutherland,



Dominic Cossa, Spiro Malas, Maria Casula; Ambrosian Opera Chorus; English Chamber Orchestra / Richard Bonyngé
Decca (11/71)

Rodolfo – LA BOHÈME

Rodolfo was the role with which Pavarotti made his stage debut. Richard Fairman returns to the tenor's recording with Freni and Karajan

My earliest memory of Pavarotti is in a revival of *La bohème* at the Royal Opera House. As his Rodolfo leant over Kiri Te Kanawa's shoulder and offered her 'un po' di vino', he sounded momentarily like a well-spoken waiter in a high-class Italian restaurant. None of the Rodolfos I had seen before had come across half as Italianate as this, or sung words that were so crystal clear (it was fascinating, later in his career, to hear him talk about the daily exercises his teacher set him to achieve this level of clarity).

Then, in the love duet, that golden tenor came pouring forth. No strain, no forcing, no unevenness: the voice filled the theatre effortlessly, seeming to envelop those of us in the cheap seats at the top. Here was singing to fall in love with –


PENTATONE

**NEW
ALBUM!**

Grieg *Lyric Pieces*

Mendelssohn *Lieder ohne Worte*

Denis Kozhukhin

RECENT RELEASES



PTC 5186 620

Ravel & Gershwin
Denis Kozhukhin
Orchestre de la Suisse Romande
Kazuki Yamada



PTC 5186 568

Brahms - Ballades & Fantasies
Denis Kozhukhin

www.pentatonemusic.com














And in all good record shops

PAVAROTTI'S GREATEST ROLES

nobody would have blamed Mimì if she had declared undying devotion and the performance had ended then and there.

Rodolfo had been Pavarotti's first role in opera back in 1961 and, alongside his childhood friend from Modena Mirella Freni, they were to sing *La bohème* many times together, including on the Decca set conducted by Karajan.

Released in the mid-1970s, the recording captures Pavarotti in his early prime. It was surprising at the time how much slower Karajan's speeds were than in his live Salzburg Festival broadcast, too slow really for an authentic Italian opera experience, but he and Pavarotti use the extra time to their advantage. The ending of Act 3 lingers with valedictory beauty, Pavarotti floating the line 'alla stagion dei fior', as if he does not want to let it go.



Mirella Freni and Pavarotti at Salzburg in 1976

I was disappointed he did not sing it the same way at the Royal Opera House, but perhaps some effects are best left to the safety of the recording studio.

As much in the theatre as on a recording, it was only ever Pavarotti's singing that mattered. You can hear why on this *Bohème* – in the beautiful Italian tone, the exemplary phrasing, the way he sang from the heart. Bring him back! We miss him.

THE RECORDING

Puccini *La bohème*

Sols incl Mirella Freni, Nicolai Ghiaurov, Elizabeth Harwood, Rolando Panerai; Berlin Philharmonic

Orchestra / Herbert von Karajan

Decca (8/73)

Calaf – TURANDOT

Neil Fisher looks past Calaf's aria 'Nessun dorma', which would become Pavarotti's calling card many years later, and argues that there is much more to this impressively cast recording

Pavarotti was still in his thirties when he recorded the role of The Unknown Prince in Puccini's *Turandot* (9/73).

Only at the end of that decade did he perform the part onstage (at San Francisco Opera), and he didn't return to it often.

One aria, however, 'Nessun dorma', was a favourite, and after the 1990 World Cup in Italy it stuck to him like glue. It would stand not just as a symbol of Pavarotti's lung-busting fervour but also as the Three Tenors' calling card. And for a certain type of Englishman, it was the proper soundtrack to the tear-streaked face of Paul Gascoigne.

All of which adds clutter, not lustre, to Pavarotti's triumphant performance of that role in that zesty recording, so expressively conducted by Zubin Mehta. Mehta and Decca's esteemed producer, Christopher Raeburn, can take some credit for the success of the whole. But Pavarotti, as the messenger of love, the disruptor in ossified, cruel Peking, lights the touchpaper.

The formidable technique helps. The liquid vowels of 'Non piangere Liu' are beautifully tender, his immaculate breath control allowing Pavarotti to stay at a seductive *piano* almost throughout. Still, he can ramp it up: when the Prince finally bashes the gong and declares his love for Turandot he sounds truly desperate (with passion), but never forced.

His skirmishes with Joan Sutherland's Turandot are striking for the piquancy of the contrast between them. Sutherland is all lofty passivity (and sometimes criticised for it) while

Pavarotti oozes impulsive, almost teenage abandon. The character can be a thuggish boor but this Calaf is not. Is this how you want me, asks Sutherland, when it looks like the Prince has bested her. 'Ti voglio ardente d'amor' Pavarotti replies, with relish – 'I want you ardent with love' – and it's a goosebumps moment. Let's glide over Pav's glamorous 'Nessun dorma' (yep, he does it rather well) and feast on the pair's final duet instead. Sutherland's Turandot has been outgunned, defeated, and, worst of all, kissed. 'Mia gloria e finita' – 'My glory is ended' – she sings, appropriately wanly, as she shrinks from him in fear. But you just have to smile as Pavarotti bounds in with the rejoinder, 'No, it's just beginning'. I think this Princess and her Prince have a great future ahead of them.



Pavarotti and Caballé (as Turandot) in San Francisco in 1977

THE RECORDING

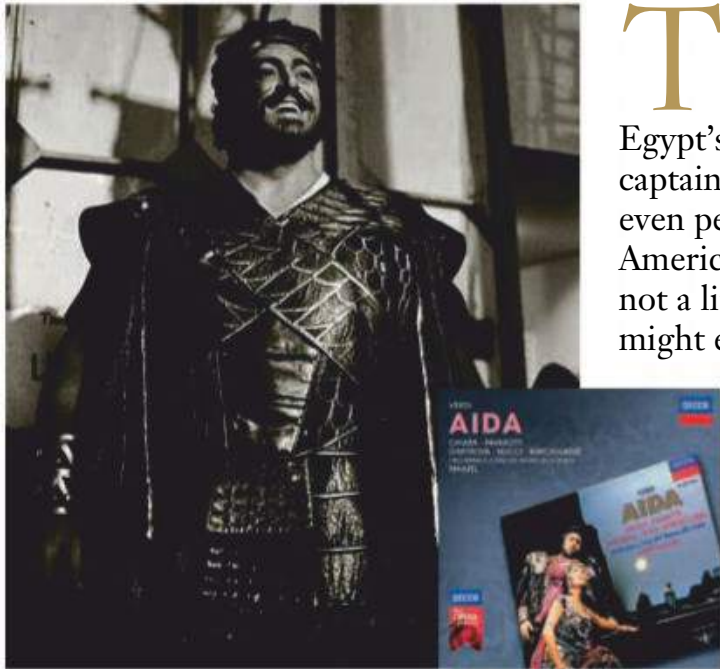
Puccini *Turandot*

Sols incl Joan Sutherland, Montserrat Caballé, Nicolai Ghiaurov, Tom Krause, Peter Pears; Wandsworth School Boys' Choir; John Alldis Choir; London Philharmonic Orchestra / Zubin Mehta

Decca (9/73)

Radames – AIDA

Mike Ashman argues that, in its fusion of the lyric and the dramatic, the role of Radames suited Pavarotti's voice perfectly



Pavarotti as Radamès in San Francisco

The inclusion, in a tribute to Pavarotti, of his performances as Ancient Egypt's compromised army captain might seem controversial, even perverse. Critics in Italy and America wondered if the role was not a little too heavy for him and might even spoil his more lyrical tones. Yet Radames sits, like many later 19th-century opera roles, on the borders of the lyric, the robust and the dramatic – all descriptions that fit Pavarotti's voice. And he had much to contribute to the role,

as did Jussi Björling, another supposedly 'lighter' voice – and a comparison that Pavarotti himself drew in interview.

This was always a voice which was remarkably successful in ensemble with louder and lower partners because of its clarity and concentration. It was never merely a question of volume or balance – Pavarotti stood out well in *Aida*, as he was to in the later *Otello* recorded in concert. In the filmings of him on stage in this work in San Francisco (where he had debuted the role in 1981) and Milan you never forget about Radames in the Triumph Scene in Act 2; you are drawn hypnotically into his plea for the vanquished. Which links in with Pavarotti as stage animal: hardly a physical actor, but a face you had to watch, that was a true mirror of emotions and text.

The loud end to 'Celeste Aida' was never a highlight but there's little lacking in heft and drama at his Act 3 curtain-line surrender 'Sacerdote, io resto a te'. The final scene in the tomb is also a standout: the emotional acuity of the phrasing make the death of the two lovers ironic, poignant and genuinely tragic.

The discography begins with a live Deutsche Oper Berlin performance from 1982. Daniel Barenboim, no less, conducts Pavarotti alongside Julia Varady's Aida and her husband Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau as Amonasro. Unfortunately, both preserved stage productions are super old-fashioned and ludicrously over-decorated. From San Francisco (with a wonderful Aida from Margaret Price) Pavarotti is uncharacteristically stiff and cautious (1981). He's much freer in La Scala's overcrowded Luca Ronconi stage production. It's the soundtrack of that show, conducted by Lorin Maazel, which furnishes Pavarotti's only 'official' recording of the complete role. Luckily it's more than a decent souvenir of the several strengths of his interpretation cited above, especially well supported by Ghenà Dimitrova's Amneris.

THE RECORDING

Verdi Aida

Sols incl Maria Chiara, Ghenà Dimitrova, Leo Nucci & Paata Burchuladze; La Scala Chorus & Orchestra / Lorin Maazel
Decca (5/90)

NEW RELEASES



Ullmann, Krása, Schulhoff, Haas Bennewitz Quartet

SU 4265-2



The music of the Theresienstadt composers, taken on by the Bennewitz Quartet: a truly congenial association.

Johann Sebastian Bach – Goldberg Variations Arundo Quartet

SU 4261-2



The Goldberg Variations in the lovely colours of woodwinds.

Leoš Janáček – Piano Works Jan Bartoš piano

SU 4266-2



Leoš Janáček according to Jan Bartoš – returning to his deepest roots.

Visit our website www.supraphon.com and subscribe to our newsletter!

Distributed and marketed in the UK by RSK ENTERTAINMENT
Distributed and marketed in the US by NAXOS OF AMERICA Inc.





Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Luciano Pavarotti, Sir Georg Solti and Leo Nucci: the artists behind Decca's high-profile *Otello*

Demands, differences & **RIVETING RESULTS**

Recording Pavarotti in *Otello* meant balancing his very specific views with Sir Georg Solti's often completely opposing ones, recalls producer Michael Haas – but the results were well worth it

The call came at 8am as it did every morning while we were rehearsing and recording in New York: 'Michael! This is Herbert Breslin. Luciano says he isn't going to sing tonight if ...' There then followed a litany of caveats: the lights – they shouldn't be bright enough to allow the audience to follow the libretto (of which Pavarotti disapproved), and the question of when they should actually go up (there was a request for the tenor to enter the stage in pitch darkness so that nobody could see him squeeze past the orchestral players); and the order in which the soloists entered the auditorium – Pavarotti was too large to enter gracefully, and being flanked by more elegant and sprightly singers would only highlight this fact.

I was the recording producer placed in a booth in the basement and absolutely none of this had anything to do with me. Actually, it mostly had to do with the Frankenstein's monster that Pavarotti's manager, Breslin, had created. It was only one of very

many issues during the making of *Otello* that indicated the utter stressfulness of any project involving Big Lucy.

And this recording, as the 'farewell' event for Sir Georg Solti after 22 years as Music Director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, was already stressful enough! The event was as high profile as it could be, with performances of *Otello* scheduled to be recorded live, first in Chicago then at Carnegie Hall in New York: different venues, different acoustics, different publics. Pavarotti had already surpassed the acceptably decent sales figures of a successful classical artist, and he supposedly vulgarised classical by going on to outsell many a pop star – to the great and good of the day, this was unforgivable. He was also making a number of people very, very rich. With piles of money came the stress and expectation that it might just all go horribly wrong.

I had forgotten how generally positive Alan Blyth's *Gramophone* review of the recording in November 1991 is.



Te Kanawa and Pavarotti in one of the concert performances of *Otello* in 1991

As ever, there are shades of condescension, with references to historic recordings that would inevitably appeal owing to their proximity to the first performances. It was hopeless to compare a modern recording (even a live one) with the stage-crafted performances of an age when opera was more theatre than music. The post-war recording industry had driven opera into the studio, and that came with unexpected artistic costs. If the voice could be recorded, who cared if the singer couldn't, or wouldn't, act? They were in an environment where nobody could see them and you could create your own image in your mind while listening. The theory was good, but in practice, opera recordings had become dramaturgically lazy: panoplies of slightly disembodied and disconnected lovely voices. And yet, Pavarotti was somehow different. His genius with the Italian language was an art form in itself. Nobody could act so completely with only his voice. It was not just the ability to pronounce every consonant and vowel clearly, it was the ability to characterise them with a vibrancy that left most other singers of his generation blindsided, including his devoted Dame Joan Sutherland.

In theory, Pavarotti was both everything wrong and everything right with modern opera recording. He was wrong because, quite frankly, on stage he was unable to bring body and voice into dramatic harmony. He was perfect in the studio, where he more than compensated for what he lost on stage. There are many singers with perfect 'recording voices', but very few of them could also spit out such dramatic characterisations

Every ensemble, according to Pavarotti, was a tenor aria with everyone else an obbligato in the background

as he did from behind the safety of the microphone.

My first encounter with Solti was coincidentally enough during Decca's recording of *Otello* in 1977 at Vienna's Sofiensaal, where I was musical assistant. It was with Carlo Cossutta and Margaret Price. Solti was terrifying, and Price was captivating. My first encounter with Pavarotti was a couple of years later as Decca's studio producer on Riccardo Chailly's recording of *Guglielmo Tell*. At the time, Decca had one producer in the booth and an assistant producer in the studio with the performers, both with scores so that issues could be addressed expediently. This time, it was Pavarotti who was terrifying. He seemed indifferent to anyone else in the cast – and the cast of *Guglielmo Tell* was pretty much as all-star as could be assembled at the time. No ensemble, no chorus, no solo could ever offer enough 'tenor presence' in his opinion.

Every ensemble, according to Pavarotti, was a tenor aria with everyone else an obbligato in the background. Mirella Freni, Sherrill Milnes and Nicolai Ghiaurov shook their heads in well-worn resignation. The producer James Mallinson suffered continuous abuse and threats. And yet Mallinson was the first colleague to tell me that Pavarotti was one of the most musical people any of us would ever work with. The more Pavarotti threatened and shouted, the more Mallinson did everything he could to accommodate him.

I continued to work with Pavarotti as studio producer on a number of other Decca recordings: *La Gioconda* and *Mefistofele* both recall an era when the studio could outmatch any opera house

for sheer vocal casting. The attitudes towards Pavarotti from my senior colleagues Ray Minshull and Christopher Raeburn varied wildly. Minshull recognised that he was a gold mine, while Raeburn felt he was a bully. Yet while in the studio with Pavarotti, I had ample opportunities to speak with him and make up my own mind. His view was always in favour of fellow Italian singers; not because they were vocally better, but because he demanded the same clarity of characterisation in the language that he offered. He felt he was otherwise singing into a vacuum, like listening to one side of a telephone conversation. I saw his point of view, but at the time, international markets were such that casting a large opera for a studio recording required the biggest stars from the Met, Covent Garden, Vienna and Milan with occasional concessions to Paris and Berlin. Given the fact that rehearsals were simply establishing

cues, pitches and beats, there were absolutely no discussions that determined dramatic characterisation or narrative purpose; the recording became for each big star whatever they brought to the party. Yet within this melee, Pavarotti always stood out with a declamatory vibrancy that brought the dramatic narrative to the music rather than the other way around.

Frankly, it was this particular genius of Pavarotti that irritated Solti the most during the *Otello* project. He had been Toscanini's assistant and Toscanini considered *Otello* his personal property. Solti had only just been handed the fresh-off-the-press critical edition from Ricordi and he wasn't going to allow Luciano to mess it up. Alan Blyth and other reviewers seemed to believe that virtually no material was taken from the first concert performance. They are mistaken. It was the only performance when Pavarotti managed to do things his way. Just listen to his Third Act 'Dio! Mi potevi scagliar tutti i mali' – Solti thrashed such rashness out of future performances, resulting in neither tenor nor conductor being able to exchange so much as a civil 'good morning' to one another.

That summer, Solti was conducting *The Magic Flute* in Salzburg and Pavarotti was relaxing in Pesaro. My summer was spent between the two locations. Pavarotti put us up in a small hotel near his villa but asked us to wake him first thing so we could start editing with his morning espresso. An editing console was set up in his bedroom for this purpose. He was always the perfect host, and in fact, the days in Pesaro were a delight. At home, he was unpretentious. I recall the plastic patio furniture purchased with collected motorway stamps from a petrol station. When the sun fell on them for any length of time, they became so soft that they became positively hazardous. It soon became a joke as to who would go flying as they unexpectedly settled down in a semi-melted plastic chair. Pavarotti had his family, friends, rehearsal pianist and mistress all in tow. A happy co-existence which daughters, wife and girlfriend accepted as the norm. There was no visible disharmony in this less-than-conventional set-up.

Returning to Solti in Salzburg meant having to undo everything Pavarotti requested. He loathed the liberties Pavarotti took with the score and wondered rhetorically what possible value a new 'critical edition' of the work could offer if the tenor simply ignored what he was instructed. In addition, Pavarotti had gone beyond editing his own role. We spent painful hours trying to find takes of Kiri that he liked. It wasn't that her Italian wasn't crystalline in its perfection; it was simply *too* perfect and in many aspects, according to Pavarotti, meaningless as a result. This would occasionally result in choosing a take that was less musically literal. Solti again preferred the versions that were absolutely *come scritto* meaning a complete re-edit was sent back to Pavarotti, who in turn simply re-edited the opera back to his first preference. This went on until we had compromised on most points except the 'Dio! Mi potevi scagliar tutti i mali'. Solti wanted what was



Michael Haas hitches a ride from the man himself

in the new critical edition and Pavarotti was simply not budging. What he sang on the opening night was deeply moving and fundamentally powerful. The horse trading came to an end when someone on a higher pay grade informed Solti that Pavarotti sold more CDs. Solti's final resigned comments on this now notorious passage was, 'Oh well, at least it's in the right octave'.


Listening to the recording again, I stand by my original comments: Kiri as Desdemona is the most beautiful voice available with a vulnerability that compensated for the immaculate perfection of Margaret Price's representation. Nucci was an Italian with a grainy voice but utterly clear diction and, given the rapid-fire wordiness of the role, it would be hard to imagine making a compromise that went in favour of a more lustrous voice at the expense of the character. I parted company with Blyth's quibbles on these points of casting. The

orchestra was another matter. Recording a symphony orchestra rather than an opera orchestra in an opera performance offers its own challenges. The symphony orchestra has superb soloists who see every passage as an opportunity to shine and not as an adjunct within the dramatic fabric. Word-painting was simply less instinctive with an orchestra used to its centre-stage position rather than merely acting as musical underlay to a piece of theatre. The brass of the Chicago Symphony was like standing in front of a firing squad: your heart would beat faster

as much in fear as anything else. It was not easy to control on the mixer. The final result, however, is perhaps more hair-raising than your average opera orchestra might have dared.

The musical differences between conductor and tenor meant that Solti was ready to murder Pavarotti

Other reviews were less kind, with most offering a sniffy variation along the lines of 'He'll never sing it on stage and the engineers have lifted him artificially'. It simply wasn't true, and reading such commentary became increasingly frustrating. Pavarotti's voice sailed across the loudest passages of the opera. By the final performances, the musical differences between conductor and tenor meant that Solti was ready to murder Pavarotti and so he let the orchestra off its leash. All to no avail: Pavarotti's focus of tone was like a laser. No voice was so loved by so many microphones.

Finally, I'm asked if Pavarotti really couldn't read music. The answer is no, he couldn't. But then, so what? He was, as James Mallinson told me at the very beginning of my career at Decca, one of the most instinctively gifted musicians any of us would work with. It wasn't easy, but looking back, it was miraculous. 

THE RECORDING



Verdi Otello

Sols incl Luciano Pavarotti, Kiri Te Kanawa, Leo Nucci; Chicago Symphony Chorus and Orchestra / Sir Georg Solti
Decca (11/91)

CHANDOS
THE SOUND OF CLASSICAL

JUNE RELEASES



RECORDING OF THE MONTH

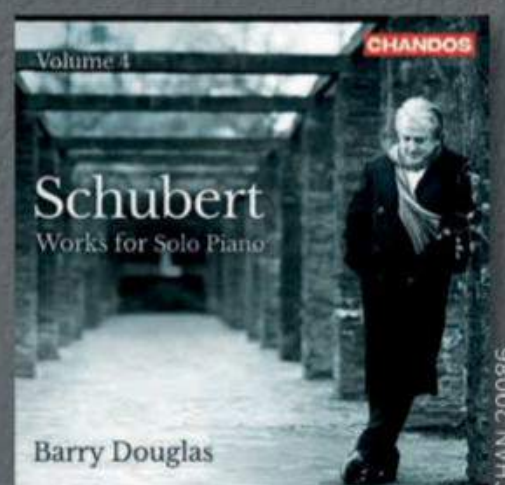
JEAN SIBELIUS

LEMMINKÄINEN SUITE · SPRING SONG
SUITE FROM 'BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST'

BBC Symphony Orchestra | Sakari Oramo

Sakari Oramo demonstrates his affinity with the music of his compatriot Sibelius.

CHAN 20136

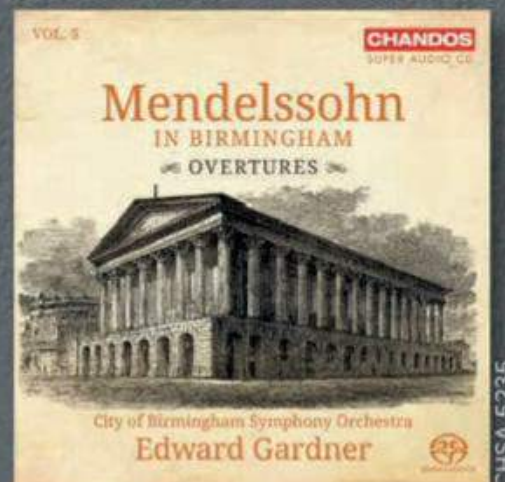


FRANZ SCHUBERT WORKS FOR SOLO PIANO, VOL. 4

Barry Douglas

Barry Douglas's critically acclaimed series of Schubert's piano works reaches its fourth instalment.

HYBRID SUPER AUDIO CD IN SURROUND SOUND



MENDELSSOHN IN BIRMINGHAM, VOL. 5

CBSO | Edward Gardner

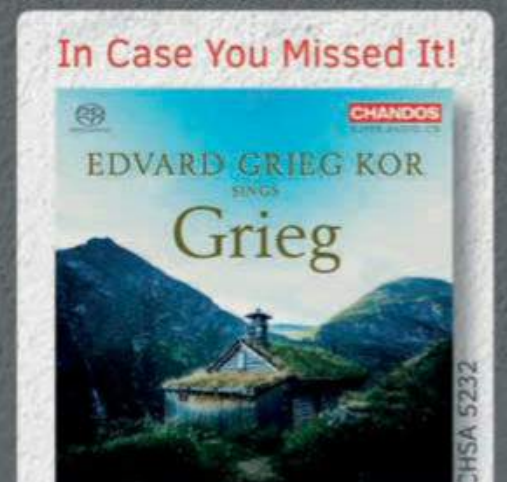
This collection of overtures is the final volume in Gardner's Mendelssohn in Birmingham series.



MOZART PIANO CONCERTOS, VOL. 4 **Jean-Efflam Bavouzet | Manchester Camerata | Gábor Takács-Nagy**

Bavouzet presents two of the most popular of all Mozart's piano concertos, composed within just one month in 1785.

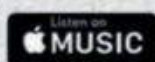
HYBRID SUPER AUDIO CD IN SURROUND SOUND



EDVARD GRIEG KOR SINGS EDVARD GRIEG

**Audun Iversen | Edvard Grieg Kor
Paul Robinson | Håkon Matti Skrede**
The outstanding solo debut recording of Edvard Grieg Kor

WWW.CHANDOS.NET
[MP3 • LOSSLESS • STUDIO • SURROUND]
[SACD • CD • USB]



**PRESTO
CLASSICAL**



STAY IN THE KNOW
Twitter Facebook Instagram YouTube

MUSIC FIT FOR A KING

With his Gabrieli forces, Paul McCreesh has recorded the best British coronation music of the 20th century, and unearthed some treasures in the process, finds **Jeremy Nicholas**

British coronation services are something of a rarity: only three in the 19th century and just four in the 20th. As state occasions, they remain unrivalled in splendour and spectacle, in their visual and aural glory – and also, no doubt, in expense. The musical element of a coronation service, though merely one part of the huge organisational jigsaw, is among the most important, providing entertainment for the congregation, creating the mood, setting the pace of the event, and accompanying processions, hymns and anthems. Very few parts of a coronation do not involve music.

An attempt to reproduce the entire service for a recording is *ipso facto* a mammoth undertaking. One man has boldly ventured to go where none has ventured before: Paul McCreesh who, with the help of his Gabrieli Consort and Players and the 300 plus young voices of Gabrieli Roar, has created ‘An English Coronation, 1902-1953’. I was there for the live part of this recording, which took place at Ely Cathedral last July, during an evening that followed one of the hottest days of that hot summer in front of (and with the participation of) an audience of nearly a thousand. Further recording and patching sessions followed over the next couple of days back at Ely, and then later at the Royal Masonic School Chapel, Rickmansworth, and the Church of St Silas the Martyr in Kentish Town.

Ely has the fourth longest nave of any cathedral in the country. As I walked down the nave to my seat, glad to escape from the heat into the cool balm of that great building, I was confronted with an awesome sight: a choir of more than 300 on raked rows of seats facing the audience, a full orchestra in front of them and, halfway down the nave, 15 fanfare trumpets and 4 side drums.

Before the ‘coronation service’ began, McCreesh gave us our instructions for hymn singing and responses, and introduced the actor Simon Russell Beale, who would be doubling the roles of narrator (just for the evening) and the Archbishop of Canterbury (for the recording). And with that, we were off with



Spirited McCreesh: ‘Coronations are a big thing in my life’

a fanfare and one of the most spine-tingling accounts of *I was glad* that any of us had ever heard.

A few weeks later, I caught up with McCreesh in the gloomy surroundings of St Silas’s. I began by asking him how the whole ambitious project had come about. ‘The real question’, he responds, ‘is why it took about 25 years! Because, as many *Gramophone* readers will know, I first made my name as a young conductor on a disc called “A Venetian Coronation, 1595” [it won a *Gramophone* Award in 1990]. We even re-recorded it about 20 years later, and it won another *Gramophone* Award! So coronations are a big thing in my life. The idea of doing an English equivalent has been at the back of my mind for many, many years.’

McCreesh is surprisingly tall and might be imposing were it not for a baby face that belies his 59 years. He is warm and friendly but there is a steely glint in his eyes. Fools, you suspect, are not suffered gladly. Highly articulate, he talks at precipitate speed, darting up side streets from the main road, hauling himself back to the motorway, and with the slightly disconcerting habit of avoiding eye contact. How on earth, I wonder, did he settle on which repertoire to include in this project?

‘With four 20th-century coronations, there is so much music to choose from, and in the concert we selected highlights of what is going to be on the disc. Probably 60 to 70 per cent of all the music from the four coronations is really first-class music. Inevitably, there was some that fell below the high standards we would have wished for. So in a sense it was easy to get rid of the rubbish. It was more difficult to choose from what was left.’

Although *I was glad* opened the Ely concert, on the sumptuously presented two-CD release on Signum it is placed 10th in the service order after more than 40 minutes of music for the Assembly, Regalia Procession and Litany, which includes Elgar’s *Coronation March* and *Pomp and Circumstance* March No 1, the hymn *O God, our help in ages past* (the concluding vocal contribution from the audience on the night



signum
CLASSICS

PAUL McCREESH GABRIELI

Featuring several hundred young singers from Gabrieli Roar, a joyful celebration of five centuries of choral music, performed with the same vast forces as were heard at the four great coronations of the twentieth century.

SIGCD569



ALBION QUARTET

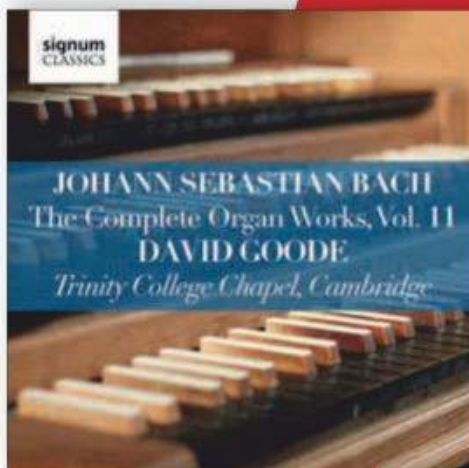
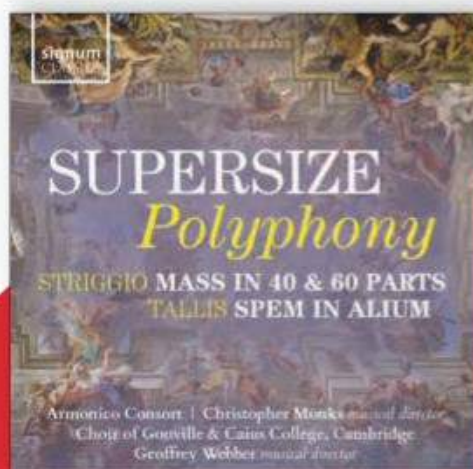
Marking the first release in a new Dvořák cycle on Signum Records and bringing together four of the UK's exceptional young string players rapidly establishing themselves on the international stage.

SIGCD555

ARMONICO CONSORT Christopher Monks director

A celebration of large-scale choral works from the 16th century, presenting works of magnitude and polyphonic drama in stellar performances by two of the UK's leading choral ensembles.

SIGCD560



DAVID GOODE

Vol. 11 of the complete organ works of Johann Sebastian Bach, played on the Metzler Söhne organ of Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge by master organist David Goode. Includes the notoriously difficult, Trio Sonata No. 6, BWV 530.

SIGCD811

philharmonia
orchestra

WEIMAR BERLIN:

BITTERSWEET METROPOLIS

MUSIC, FILM AND DRAMA
FOR TURBULENT TIMES



JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2019

ESA-PEKKA SALONEN
conductor

Sci-fi masterpiece *Metropolis*
with live soundtrack
Multimedia *cabaret* show
Music by *Berg*, *Hindemith* and *Weill*
Insights Day and free talks

philharmonia.co.uk/weimar_berlin



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**SOUTHBANK
CENTRE**
RESIDENT



PRESTO
CLASSICAL

WWW.SIGNUMRECORDS.COM
Distributed by (PIAS) in the UK &
Naxos of America in the USA





'Put me in front of people and my shyness just goes': McCreesh leads huge forces at Ely Cathedral (above and previous page)

of the concert) and Parry's Chorale Fantasia on *O God, our help*. The next items at Ely were two from the Anointing section of the service: Ernest Bullock's arrangement of *Come, Holy Ghost* (performed at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, 1953) and Handel's *Zadok the Priest*, performed at every coronation service since George II's crowning in 1727 – overwhelming in Ely, but sadly not underpinned by the cathedral's organ as it was so thrillingly by Westminster Abbey's organ for the 1937 coronation.

Quiet reflection and prayerfulness characterise the next part of the service after the Anointing. At Ely we heard Walter Parratt's brief *Be strong and play the man*, the anonymous *Rejoice in the Lord always*, Byrd's *I will not leave you comfortless* and SS Wesley's *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace*. Then it was our turn again, this time in *The Old Hundredth* in Vaughan Williams's arrangement, at the end of which a slight and understandable loss of coordination between mid-nave fanfare trumpets, audience, choir, orchestra and organ led to a post-concert retake of the last verse. This was the offertory hymn to the second part of the communion service, which included what was, for me, a hair-raising discovery: Stanford's *Gloria* in B flat, written for George V's coronation. 'Yes, it's not done often,' says McCreesh, 'and is most beautifully orchestrated,

'In the coronations they had more than 400 in the choir. We didn't quite reach that, but we had over 300, including 200 choirboys'

School of Music when it was at the vanguard of musical education. We had a list of Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra commissions, from all the great composers, including Tippett. I taught the cello, I ran the teachers' choir, I ran the junior string centre, the junior orchestra. All this was

completely free of charge to the children, paid for by the rates. We don't need to go to Venezuela to see how it's done. We need to invest some money to teach music in schools. It's that simple.

You've got to do it in school. At my primary school in the late 1960s I had music lessons given to me for free by the local authority. I started on the cello, and because I was a reasonably good cellist I went on to study at a specialist music school we had in the county which also had a youth orchestra and a youth choir. From there I went to university. Even then I had no conception of becoming a professional musician because people from my background didn't do that. I still have that anger inside, that desire. Young people are the most important people I work with. If I let an orchestra down, I feel embarrassed. If I let a kid down, I feel ashamed.'

How did McCreesh make the not-inconsiderable jump from the classroom to being not just a conductor but an entrepreneur and businessman? 'How did I get from being a schoolteacher to



The fourth coronation of the 20th century – that of Queen Elizabeth II, in 1953

bullshitting my way into getting a Deutsche Grammophon contract in a period of about six or seven years, you mean? Part of it was luck, but, to use an irritating phrase, I worked very hard for my luck. I must have had a tremendous amount of self-belief, way beyond my talent, certainly in my twenties. As far as the conducting goes, there isn't so much of a gap. I was always a conductor. Even at school. I was incredibly shy, but was asked to get some friends together to do one of the church charity concerts we used to do. I seemed to be quite good at that. Put me in front of people and ask me to do something and my shyness just goes.'

Most of McCreesh's career is spent away from the recording studio and vocal music. For 25 weeks of the year he is getting on and off planes working with orchestras, for – despite the work for which he is best known – he sees himself as 'basically an orchestral conductor'. It just so happens that most of the 70 or so records he has made feature singing in some shape or form. He also managed to sell to various record labels such unpromising commercial propositions as Hérold's opera *Le pré aux clercs*, 'Music for the Duke of Lerma' and Morales's Mass for the feast of St Isidore of Seville. 'One thing I've always been really good at', he admits, 'is that I've always had a fairly strong commercial instinct and been able to work as a businessman. I shamelessly admit to being a bit of a Cockney trader. You know what they call me in the business, don't you? "Moy-stro!" I was brought up in Hornchurch, in Essex, but I am literally a cockney 'cos I was born within the sound of Bow Bells, at Guy's Hospital. I can talk li' tha' if yer wan', guv, but it don't go down too well on Radio Free, so I don't.' I tell him that, *au contraire*, he'd be a huge hit on Radio 3 and just the kind of person they're looking for. 'I got it sorted,' McCreesh laughs uproariously. "Diamond Geezer Classics!" "Music for Taxi Drivers, Volume Four". He becomes serious again. 'No, look, joking apart, I can be very, very tough. I can drive choirs to distraction. Someone who worked with me wrote, "He can be diabolically demanding and then angelically sweet in the next second – nobody knows what's coming next."'

In 2011, McCreesh launched his own record label, Winged Lion, in collaboration with his Gabrieli Consort and Players, Signum Classics and the Wratistavia Cantans festival, where he was artistic director from 2006 to 2012. The first title



Warming up: fanfare trumpets, Gabrieli Players and Gabrieli Roar

was a stunning account of Berlioz's *Grande messe des morts*, a *Gramophone* Editor's Choice. To date, they have made 10 recordings, most recently 'A Rose Magnificat', comprising music dedicated to the Virgin Mary by composers from the Renaissance to the present day including Tallis, Howells, Leighton, James MacMillan and young British composer Matthew Martin, whose setting of the *Magnificat* interpolated with verses from the atmospheric medieval poem 'There is no rose' is given its world premiere.

Returning to the Ely concert, one unfamiliar piece and one world premiere followed the Stanford *Gloria*. Walton's *Te Deum*, which was played after the conclusion of the Communion section, is a work few people have encountered outside the 1953 coronation service for which it was written. 'No,' McCreesh confirms, 'and it's a great ceremonial piece. Walton obviously loved the commission. There's a lovely comment in a letter he wrote: "I'm having a little trouble abhorring the Virgin's womb. You'd better be careful not to tell the Archbishop!"'

And then it was time for the national anthem. Whose arrangement would it be? Elgar's? No: it's never been played at a coronation. Britten's? No: not written till 1962. Jacob's? It *was* used at the 1953 service. No. Instead, it was a new commission from David Matthews, an arrangement in which the first verse, scored for chamber choir and strings, is prefaced with a procession of themes heard earlier in the service prior. Everybody piled in for the second verse (full orchestra, organ, bells, choir, descant sopranos, fanfare trumpets and congregation), ending with a final note which we were asked, optimistically, to hold for a full 15 seconds.

Just before 10pm, we were all thanked by McCreesh and released

into the still-warm summer night. A few drinks later, and everyone retired – elated but exhausted. The next morning, I returned to the cathedral. There was McCreesh as fresh as a daisy, dressed in T-shirt, combat shorts and sandals, putting the fanfare trumpets and then his woodwind section through their paces for those retakes. Here's a man with a fierce passion and a musician with an agenda. Who wouldn't put money on his latest coronation project being crowned with another *Gramophone* Award? **G**

► To read our review of 'An English Coronation, 1902-1953', turn to page 89



The 10th Osaka International Chamber Music Competition & Festa

May 15 - 22, 2020

Application Open Application: **April 1 - October 10, 2019**

Chamber Music Competition

- **Category** Section 1: **String Quartet**
Section 2: **Piano Trio or Piano Quartet**
- **Eligibility** **The competition is open to ensembles of all nationalities whose members are the age of 35 or younger.**
- **Jury** Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi (chairman) / Martin Beaver / Yi-Wen Jiang / Kazuki Sawa / Monika Henschel / Mai Motobuchi / Alasdair Tait / Vincent Coq / Eckart Heiligers / Shigeo Neriki
- **Prize** for both section 1st prize: 3,000,000 JPY
2nd prize: 1,500,000 JPY 3rd prize: 1,000,000 JPY
- **Entry fee** 20,000 JPY / ensemble
(for the group which will pass the preliminary)
- **Financial support** Travel and accommodation fee will be supported by the organizer

Chamber Music Festa

- **Category** **Ensemble consisting of two to six instrumentalists.**
Any combinations of instruments including traditional instrument are welcomed. All the instruments should be prepared by participant except for piano and harpsichord.
- **Eligibility** **The Festa is open to ensembles of all nationalities with no age limitation.**
- **Repertoire** **Free**
(performance of each round should be within 25 minutes.)
- **Jury** Toshikazu Umemoto (chairman) / Masataka Kono (vice-chairman) / Shin-ichi Go (vice-chairman)
In addition to the chairman and vice-chairmen, the Festa will be judged by a large number of audience members who will be selected in public offering beforehand.
- **Prize** Menuhin Gold Prize: 2,000,000 JPY
Silver Prize: 1,000,000 JPY Bronze Prize: 500,000 JPY
Finalist Prize: 200,000 JPY

For more information <http://www.jcmf.or.jp/competition-festa/en/>

 **JAPAN CHAMBER MUSIC FOUNDATION**
JCMF TEL: +81-(0)6-6947-2184 E-MAIL: osaka-comp@jcmf.or.jp

Soggetto di rilevanza regionale con il patrocinio di



PATROCINIO
Comune di
Milano



Milan 2019 - 2020 | piano

“Honoring tradition and supporting the future”

**PREMIO
INTERNAZIONALE
ANTONIO
MORMONE**

Honorary president
Evgeny Kissin

Artistic direction
Enrica Ciccarelli
Matthieu Mantanus

First prize 30.000 € • international concert engagements • a recording on Universal • one year of management Lorenzo Baldrygh Artists • public selections • international jury • final round at Teatro alla Scala, July 5th 2020

Application deadline July 4th | antoniomormone.org



A man with grey hair, wearing a black shirt and pants, is seated and playing a cello. He is barefoot. The background is dark. There are several glowing, ethereal light trails or smoke-like patterns swirling around the cello and the man. In the lower right corner, there is a glowing, textured sphere that looks like a planet or a moon. The title text is at the top, with musical staves on either side.

The cellist with the MIDAS TOUCH

Melting barriers between classical, jazz and Indian music, Matthew Barley brings a uniquely free spirit to all he does – and his new Tavener recording is no exception, writes Charlotte Gardner

Were you to attempt to draw some sort of visual chart of Matthew Barley's musical exploits to date, you'd be setting yourself a fearsome challenge. The mass of separate genre and activity categories dotted around the page would likely resemble an inky, abstract fireworks display, such would be the sheer number of separate lines shooting out of each category to then explode with those from others. The same approach to his discography would yield similar results: a fizzing cornucopia of new classical works mixed with world music, electronic music and jazz, none of it repeating anything previously recorded by any other artist.

So while it was clear that this cellist and I would begin our chat with a focus on his new recording of Tavener's *The Protecting Veil*, it was much less clear to me, during my pre-interview planning, where we would leap next. But as it happened, even the standard opening question, 'Why record *The Protecting Veil*, and why now?' took us off down a fascinating diversion – which tells you all you need to know about Barley and the way he works.

'I suppose the timing of it is just a simple question of the moment when the required forces come together being the right moment,' he begins. 'The Riga Sinfonietta came along because I've been working quite a lot in Latvia for years, which itself happened because one day the director of Riga's

Ad Lucem Introvert

Art Festival called me for a chat and said:

"You're known for really unusual ideas. Can you give me an unusual idea,

please?" Right there and then on the phone! So I just said the first thing that came into my head, which was: "Why not do an all-night concert where I start at 11pm and finish at 7am, and then we all have breakfast together?" They loved it, and I've done it four or five times there now. So I knew about the Riga Sinfonietta, and basically with them it's still Soviet-style training, which is *so* good for strings; and while *The Protecting Veil*'s orchestral writing is not at all virtuosic, you do need a really good sound and also the ability to be able to play absolutely in tune, both of which those players have.'

Didn't Barley have Russian training himself? 'Yes,' he affirms. 'Two years at the Moscow Conservatoire. And it's interesting because if you look down orchestral personnel lists in London it's like the United Nations – there are so many different nationalities! – whereas in Russia every name is Russian, and it's pretty much the same in Latvia: the teachers there are all Russian and they're all Russian-trained, meaning it's one of the few places that you can really hear a national pedigree in the sound. And this Russian sound just feels right for Tavener with his conversion to the Orthodox Church.'

It's the perfect swerve back to the piece itself, and this time we stay there. 'It really is my favourite concerto,' he claims, 'and it has been almost from its beginnings, too, which coincide with my own career's formative years. I first heard it at Snape in what was probably the second year of its existence, when I was in my early twenties. Then soon afterwards, in 1992, again at Snape, the London Sinfonietta performed it under Oliver Knussen,

who had conducted its 1989 BBC Proms premiere. Olly and I had met at Tanglewood in around 1987 and got on really well, and because it was the London Sinfonietta's own principal cellist Christopher van Kampen who was taking the solo part, Olly suggested I play principal cello for that concert. I remember that experience so clearly. I'd already been doing quite a bit of Sinfonietta work, and we'd been playing all these incredibly difficult scores from really tricky Boulez-type composers. Then here was *The Protecting Veil*, where Chris played the first three notes, stayed on the top A, the orchestra came in, and ... kind of nothing happened! But I was just very, very moved, and wanted to play the solo part. I then did so soon afterwards at Dartington, but this wasn't a very satisfactory performance, because I hadn't memorised it at that point, meaning I had a page turner which is so *weird*. Plus, I love to play with my eyes closed, which obviously you can't do if you're reading music.' He continues, 'It's actually very difficult to memorise, though, because the whole piece is in song form, with the verse – consisting of five cello phrases and five orchestral answers – coming back seven times in all, on each occasion with identical material but in different keys and with subtly different note values. However, I just happen to have a weird memory for numbers – if I hear a telephone number I'll remember it for two or three days. So now I've got these huge sequences of numbers that I can just recite

when I play. I have still had memory lapses, but it's worth the suffering to be able to play in the conditions I want.'

Looking at that aforementioned fizzing

discography, I notice a fascination with Indian classical music – and this is another part of the work's lure for Barley, much as he didn't know this back at the beginning. 'Later, in June 2011, I spent a day with Tavener working on the piece,' he explains. 'I was very curious about one of his directions which asks you to play as in the microtones of Byzantine chant, and when I played him a few options to establish what he meant, the one he chose was the one closest to ornamented Indian classical music. It turned out that he'd been listening to Indian music a lot at the time of writing, and once I knew that, the piece suddenly made sense on a completely different level. I refingered the whole thing then, to make it full of slides and much more like the way I play Indian classical music. So now it's become dear to me for even bigger reasons, because it's the only piece in the classical canon of my repertoire that I play as though it's not classical.'

With the rest of the CD programme, Barley further honours Tavener in his own unique way. First, there are three of the composer's favourite poems read by actresses Julie Christie and Olwyn Fouéré, in recognition of Tavener's ideas of the eternal feminine. Then there's Barley's new transcription of Tavener's choral work *Mother and Child*. This features Barley improvising, which is something he does widely – not just in his own music-making, but also through coaching activities (notable past projects include Paavo Järvi inviting him to lead daily improvisation sessions with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen before they recorded the Schumann symphonies). When I say how beautiful I find

'Tavener was listening to Indian music around the time he wrote it, so it's the only classical piece that I play as if it's not classical'



Performing *The Protecting Veil* with the Riga Sinfonietta at the Anglican Church, Riga, in early July last year; Barley recorded the work with the same forces the following day

his reworked *Mother and Child*, Barley's face lights up in pleased surprise. 'One of my favourite bits of the entire CD are the orchestral bits in that!' he exclaims. 'But funnily enough, that piece was ever so squashed. I only prepared its structure the night before, and the improvisations not at all. Then, by the time we got to it in the session, we only had 15 minutes left, and no overtime. So I just thought, OK, let's just read through it. Which means that the improvisations you hear are the only ones I ever did.'

Those improvisations have a definite Indian tinge to them, and it's with Indian music that the album climaxes, with Sultan Khan's *The Song of Separation and Waiting*, for which Barley

is joined by tabla player Sukhvinder 'Pinky' Singh. 'I met Sultan Khan when I was directing the grand finale of a WOMAD festival,' he recounts. 'He played the *sārangī*, which might be one of the oldest relatives of the violin. It's played with a bow, upright like a cello, and it's kind of violin-sized; but you stop the string with your cuticle so it's sort of a dying art because it's so painful that nobody wants to play it! We didn't speak each other's languages, but we got together in this weird little hotel room in Brisbane and he taught me the piece via a friend who was interpreting.'

Barley doesn't try to imitate the *sārangī* himself, except for in one tiny section. 'They have an ornament called the *gamak*,' he explains. 'Our closest equivalent is vibrato, but while we play vibrato with a stationary finger, for the *gamak* they wave the whole hand around so that the pitch varies much more. I just play the *sārangī* melody as a cellist, but in the cadenza, although it's hard to hear, with the three lowest notes I do that oscillation as a sort of tribute to India.'

There's a more obvious tribute to India this coming November, with a major project planned with Indian musicians as part of the Wimbledon International Music Festival. But perhaps the best example of how this cellist likes to make music is a pair of June concerts at Austria's spa retreat-cum-classical chamber venue Schloss Elmau. 'I'll gather a bunch of ingredients that look like they'll be really fun, have an allotted work time, and just see what happens,' explains Barley. 'These particular concerts are with my violinist wife Viktoria Mullova,

mandolin player Avi Avital, the tabla player on my disc, Sukvinder Singh, and sarod player Soumik Datta. So it's a pretty cool bunch of ingredients, and at its most simple it may merely be that I create some new bits of Indian-type repertoire with Pinky and Soumik, and then Avi, Viktoria and myself play some movements from Bach, and we just find a nice order for it all. However, what I'd love is to devise some meeting points: transition passages, either freely improvised

or structured.'

Does he ever just play core classical repertoire *without* a twist, I wonder? 'Oh, definitely, yes,' is the reply. 'In fact, I've just emerged from nine performances

in a row of the Dvořák Cello Concerto at venues including Tokyo's Suntory Hall. But it's a valid question, because that is really unusual for me. Almost always I find a way of putting something else in there.' As if proof were needed, we next touch on his excitement over a forthcoming jazz project in November with the BBC Concert Orchestra for the London Jazz Festival: the world premiere of a new concerto written for him by his stepson, Misha Mullov-Abbado, a BBC New Generation Artist. And I can't possibly conclude our interview without at least alluding to the 'Gear' section of his website, which lists all the equipment Barley uses, including a 'Digitech JamMan footpedal loopstation'. Should we slip in some talk of electronic music, then?

'Ooh, yeah!' comes the enthusiastic response – and off we go. Ports of call include a new piece he's playing by Dr Oded Ben-Tal, using software which listens to the instrument and then improvises in response, and his excitement over German composer Nils Frahm ('Have you heard of him? I think it might be electronic music coming of age'), before we arrive at a surprise.

'I might be challenging myself to compose in the future, and I think electronics is the way to go,' he announces. 'I've been thinking about it for about 20 years now, but I've just never chased it to the end. So I probably need to start owning up to it in interviews! It's terrifying, but I think a residency might be a really good place to start.' You heard it here first. **G** *Matthew Barley's recording of Tavener's The Protecting Veil is released by Signum on June 14 and will be reviewed next issue*



DUTTON EPOCH NEW RELEASE

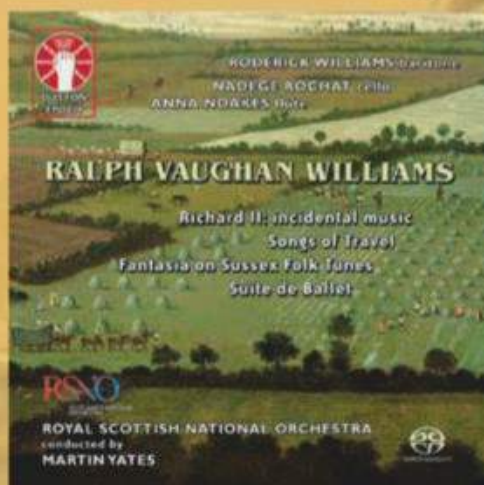


CDLX 7361

THOMAS ARNE

The Judgment of Paris Thomas Arne's opera *The Judgment of Paris* (1742), a setting of William Congreve's libretto of the same name, is known only from the printed score, but in this world premiere recording is performed with panache and authority by The Brook Street Band and a scintillating young cast led by sopranos Mary Bevan (Venus), Susanna Fairbairn (Pallas) and Gillian Ramm (Juno), with tenors Ed Lyon as the shepherd Paris and Anthony Gregory as Mercury, all under the expert direction of conductor John Andrews. By the end of the opera we are not surprised when Venus's softly, softly appeal to her shepherd judge succeeds over the more demonstrative blandishments of her competitors, Pallas and Juno. This is a lovely discovery, with all the cast joining in the spirit of this fable to give it a stylish and compelling revival.

**THE BROOK STREET BAND
JOHN ANDREWS**



CDLX 7359

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Songs of Travel Dutton Epoch is thrilled to present celebrated baritone Roderick Williams in the complete orchestral version of Vaughan Williams's *Songs of Travel*. Recorded at the Caird Hall, Dundee, in one remarkable session, everyone present was gripped by the music's eloquence and impact. Written between the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, Vaughan Williams's incidental music for a BBC wartime production of Shakespeare's *Richard II* was delivered by the composer in 1944, but went unheard when the production was aborted. This world premiere recording of RVW's score reveals the composer at the peak of his powers. The *Fantasia on Sussex Folk Tunes* for cello and orchestra was written for Pablo Casals, and here, in cellist Nadège Rochat's singing performance, the tunes appear as a succession of musical jewels. The short *Suite de Ballet* for flute and piano can now be heard in composer Roger Steptoe's idiomatic 1989 orchestration for flute and strings. Flautist Anna Noakes projects the flute line with fine tone and the strings of the RSNO provide a sumptuous context.

**ROYAL SCOTTISH NATIONAL ORCHESTRA
MARTIN YATES**



CDLX 7355

Walter Braunfels

VOLUME 4 This, the fourth and final volume in Dutton Epoch's Walter Braunfels series, features conductor Johannes Wildner and the BBC Concert Orchestra, plus guest soloists, in a programme of the composer's later music. Piers Lane (piano) is the brilliant soloist in the lyrical *Hebridentänze*, a delightful set of variations on two Scottish folk tunes, while the solo parts of the *Sinfonia Concertante* are authoritatively projected by Ernst Kovacic (violin) and Thomas Selditz (viola), who are especially effective in the emotional *Adagio* and contrapuntal Finale. The *Suite in E minor* presents five contrasted movements composed between 1933 and 1936. Long thought lost, this splendid rediscovery was made possible by the unearthing of the orchestral parts, from which the full score was reconstructed. The earlier volumes in this series have all presented rewarding Braunfels discoveries, and this final volume continues that tradition.

**BBC CONCERT ORCHESTRA
JOHANNES WILDNER**



CDLX 7363

EDWARD ELGAR

The Spanish Lady This disc contains four works that have evolved from Elgar's original versions. The two works wholly from Elgar's pen are the *Severn Suite*, commissioned for the 1930 National Brass Band Championships, which Elgar arranged for orchestra the following year; and *Civic Fanfare*, commissioned for the 1927 Three Choirs Festival. Perhaps best known for its unusual orchestration and convoluted history, recent research has shown the fanfare's oral history to be substantially wide of the mark. This disc contains all three versions handed down to us, which allow the keen-eared to appreciate how Elgar developed the work in the six weeks from commission to first performance. The *Organ Sonata*, written for a convention of American organists visiting Worcester in 1895, was orchestrated by Gordon Jacob in 1946, and in this form brings out the full splendour of Elgar's original. But the real discovery is Martin Yates's symphonic suite on themes from Elgar's unfinished opera *The Spanish Lady*. Who knows how Elgar may have reworked the sketches and fragments he had assembled for the opera by his death; but one can only hope it would have been as Elgarian as the work Yates presents us with here.

**ROYAL SCOTTISH NATIONAL ORCHESTRA
MARTIN YATES**

Sourced from the vaults of Sony Music/RCA, these 1970s albums were recorded in stereo as well as discrete four-channel quadrasonic sound. These exquisitely remastered SACD reissues contain both the original stereo and quadrasonic mixes



CDSML 8554

TOMITA

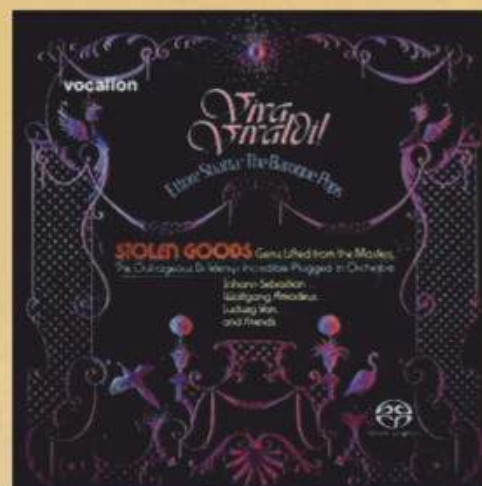
RAVEL: DAPHNIS ET CHLOÉ



CDSML 8558

TOMITA

STRAVINSKY: FIREBIRD



CDSML 8552

**DR. TELENY'S INCREDIBLE
PLUGGED-IN ORCHESTRA:
STOLEN GOODS
& ETTORE STRATTA
AND THE BAROQUE POPS:
VIVA VIVALDI!**



CDLX 7360

**PIERRE BOULEZ
NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
BOULEZ CONDUCTS BARTÓK:
CONCERTO FOR ORCHESTRA
THE MIRACULOUS MANDARIN**

For full release details visit www.duttonvocalion.co.uk | Many titles in the Dutton Epoch series are available on iTunes
Dutton Epoch | PO Box 609 | Watford WD18 7YA | T: 01923 803 001 | info@duttonvocalion.co.uk

The BBC Concert Orchestra and BBC Radio 3 logos are trademarks of the BBC and are used under licence.



Bruges' characteristic towers, spires and steep-sloped roofs, with the terracotta facade of the 2002 Concertgebouw Brugge at the south end of the square

BRUGES

the fairy-tale classical music city

The city's stunning medieval architecture has earned it World Heritage status but among its newest buildings is one of the country's leading music venues

The Flemish city of Bruges needs no introduction. It gave the world some of the most stunning oil paintings ever created. It helped cradle a distinctive polyphonic choral tradition that became one of the most admired in musical history. Perhaps most of all, it is known and loved as a city whose physical beauty never ceases to inspire. Whether carpeted by daffodils in spring or whitened by snow and frost in winter, Bruges is a dream for the eyes, from serene canals and winding cobbled streets to soaring towers.

But Bruges boasts more than some of the best-preserved medieval architecture in the world. With the Concertgebouw, it contains one of Belgium's finest modern concert halls, which is itself the focus of a lively classical music scene at the cutting edge of performance practice, international collaboration and innovative programming.

The Concertgebouw Brugge is one of Belgium's finest modern concert halls, the focus of a lively classical music scene

The city made its name as a trading hub. These days, cultural exchanges keep Bruges refreshed and enlivened, and a steady influx of musicians is vital.

Many come to Bruges in August for the early music festival MAFestival, which in 2019 asks big questions about humanity's relationship to deities and technologies under the banner *Ex machina: God, man & machine*. In imagining man's hubris, godliness and obsession with technology, the festival welcomes major early music groups and soloists from throughout the world including the *Gramophone* Award-winning ensemble Vox Luminis, who

open the festival with Purcell's charming *King Arthur*.

A varied programme includes opera by Lully, a celebration of the countertenor voice, a delve into Bach's Cello Suites and an excursion into the early music of South America courtesy of ensembles and artists including Arcangelo,



Within and around its contemporary architecture, the Concertgebouw Brugge offers two concert halls and a range of restaurants, cafés and meeting areas

Cappella Mediterranea, La Chimera, Benjamin Glorieux, Tim Mead and many more. Just as Bruges is a modern, technological city behind its gorgeous medieval facade, so Musica Antiqua is more than a festival. It is a competition, a conference and a focal point for anyone involved in early music.

It's not just in August that Bruges is alive with the sound of music. Its very own orchestra playing on period-specific instruments, Anima Eterna Brugge, is renowned the world over for performances of music from five centuries. From their home at the Concertgebouw Bruges, a contemporary architectural landmark designed by Paul Robbrecht and Hilde Daem, Anima have made a string of acclaimed recordings of music under their founder-conductor Jos van Immerseel.

They undertake an exploration of music by Spohr and Schubert (28 September) and offer an all-Russian programme of Prokofiev, Rimsky-Korsakov and Rachmaninov (29 November), for which they are joined by the pianist Anna Vinnitskaya for the latter's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*.

Building on their enviable reputation in the performance of Beethoven's music, they combine with the Dresden Chamber Choir next April for a concert promising fireworks, all from Beethoven's pen. In the quieter off-season, Anima Eterna is a Bruges essential.

As you might expect from a city brimming with masterpieces of Baroque art, Bruges has a strong affinity with the music of Bach. That affinity will deliver rich fruits in a special edition of the Bach Academy Bruges at the start of next year. The 2020 Bach Academy will celebrate the entire Bach family (some 50 musicians) as well as the greatest Bach of all, Johann Sebastian. The Academy, based at the Concertgebouw, will open the doors to Bach's private life and family, and welcomes as its main guest the conductor Philippe Herreweghe and his superlative chamber choir, Collegium Vocale Gent. For total immersion in the works of Bach and his family – in surroundings that match the precision, beauty and inspiration of his music – look no further. **G**

For more information, go to brugessoundsgreat.com.

GRAMOPHONE

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

David Fanning welcomes outstanding accounts of two Weinberg symphonies from the CBSO and Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, a triumph that crowns the composer's centenary year



Weinberg

Symphonies – No 2, Op 30^a;

No 21, 'Kaddish', Op 152^b

^bGidon Kremer *vn* Kremerata Baltica;

^bCity of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra /
Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla

DG © 483 6566 (89' • DDD)

The UK premiere of Symphony No 21 in Symphony Hall last November was a watershed moment for Weinberg's reputation. It actually proved two things I wouldn't have dared to predict: that one of his longest symphonies (55 minutes, six movements without a break, composed in 1991) could hold a full-size regular concert audience enthralled from first note to last, and that it could comfortably withstand the comparison with Shostakovich's Fifteenth in the second half. The appearance of this performance on a major prestige label will surely prove one of the highlights of this, his centenary year.

The work has a multi-resonance backstory. It is dedicated to the victims of the Warsaw Ghetto, where Weinberg often said his parents and sister died (though where they actually perished is less than clear) and subtitled *Kaddish* after the Jewish prayer traditionally recited in memory of the dead. Its composition overlapped with his work on the film score to Boris Yermolaev's *Our Father*, which tells of a Jewish mother and child who try to avoid consignment to the ghetto by wandering around the city at night in winter (including a church where the 'Our Father' is being intoned), but who are eventually found frozen to death and are unceremoniously thrown into the back of a truck. Weinberg took over the violin solos that accompany this appalling odyssey as one of the main thematic threads for the



'It takes a performance of fierce concentration and absolute dedication to ensure this music's hold on an audience'

symphony, and his draft score shows that they derive from Mahler's 'Das irdische Leben' (the setting of 'Mother, mother, I am hungry; give me bread, or I shall die' – in the *Andantino* section, the mother's reply

'Just you wait, just you wait' is also cited, on a hollow-sounding xylophone). A wild imitation-klezmer ensemble, a sepulchral quotation from Chopin's First Ballade (as painfully symbolic as the appearance of the same piece in Roman Polanski's *The Pianist*), angelic soprano vocalises and several self-quotations from Weinberg's own works complete the picture of a work heavily laden with semantic signposts.

Lest all of this be thought of as mere opportunistic audience-manipulation, it should be said that the connecting tissue of Weinberg's music is remorselessly austere and artistically controlled, making the cumulative effect all the more profound. Not for him the glamour of Penderecki's exercises in public compassion. And it is hard to see Weinberg's 21st Symphony being co-opted for documentary purposes in the manner of Górecki's Third (not Górecki's fault, it should be said).

It takes a performance of fierce concentration and absolute dedication to ensure this music's hold on an audience.

The Siberian SO's pioneer recording was a brave and noble venture but it is inevitably outclassed here. How could it not be, when the CBSO, with its newly appointed fireball Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, is teamed up with Kremerata Baltica, lending extraordinary depth and power to the string sound and transforming passages in which the Siberians were clearly beyond full stretch into bursts of impassioned outrage. Add in Gidon Kremer – no less – for the violin solos, the conductor herself taking the soprano lines with a pure non-vibrato keening (the concert shared them rather awkwardly between a boy soloist and a concert soprano), and some



Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla brings shape and structure to Weinberg



The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra are joined by Kremerata Baltica and Gidon Kremer under the expert guidance of Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla

superbly focused piano, clarinet and double bass solos, and you have an experience for which ‘compelling’ is scarcely an adequate description.

The neoclassical restraint and transparency of the 1946 Second Symphony, for strings alone, could hardly be further removed from all this raw lamentation and violence. Yet the juxtaposition serves to bring out affinities in the material (both works pick up from the Jewish-inflected Scherzo of the String Quartet No 4 of 1945). The Kremerata Baltica bring out even more subtleties of emotion than the superb but currently hard-to-get Moscow Chamber Orchestra and Barshai, eclipsing the worthy Swedish alternative, now back in the catalogue on Alto. Apart from her evident identification with the idiom,

Gražinytė-Tyla has a terrific feel for the long structural-dramatic line, which brings not just new shades of detail but also an enhanced overall perspective to this piece.

The appearance of these two symphonies on an illustrious label is another clear pointer to Weinberg’s ‘arrival’. Unsurprisingly, the depth and realism of DG’s recording are superb, and the all-important spatial distancing of the soloists in the *Kaddish* Symphony is beautifully captured. All in all, this has to be one of the most important symphonic releases of the year. **G**

Symphony No 21 – comparative version:

Siberian SO, Vasilyev (A/14) (TOCC) TOCC0193

Symphony No 2 – comparative versions:

Moscow CO, Barshai (OLYM) OCD472

Umeå SO, Svedlund (ALTO) ALC1037

KEY TO SYMBOLS

Ⓕ	£10 and over	⬇	Download only
Ⓜ	£7.76 to £9.99	Ⓡ	Reissue
Ⓑ	£6.25 to £7.75	Ⓜ	Historic
Ⓢ	£6.24 and below (price per disc)	T	Text(s) included
②	Compact disc (number of discs in set)	t	translation(s) included
	SACD (Super Audio CD)	S	Synopsis included
	DVD Video	s	subtitles included
	Blu-ray	nla	no longer available
Ⓛ	LP	aas	all available separately
		oas	only available separately



Editor's Choice

Martin Cullingford's pick of the finest recordings reviewed in this issue

Orchestral



Andrew Farach-Colton explores some lesser-known Saint-Saëns:

'The Adagio is so lovely I wish it were at least three times longer; while the Scherzo takes us on a wild and thrilling ride' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 48**



Charlotte Gardner rejoices in the recorder-playing of Maurice Steger:

'Extreme ensemble virtuosity, and the crackest of crack continuo units, are non-negotiables when Steger's around' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 52**

Beethoven

Complete Symphonies

Laura Aikin *sop* Ingeborg Danz *contr* Maximilian Schmitt *ten* Tareq Nazmi *bass* WDR Radio Choir; WDR Symphony Orchestra / Jukka-Pekka Saraste
Profil (M) ⑤ PH18066 (5h 44' • DDD • T/t)



From the early days of its work with Klemperer, Wand and Rosbaud, and then the '60s tenure of Christoph von Dohnányi, the radio symphony orchestra in Cologne has a distinguished history of Beethoven performance in the school of 'new objectivity' which predated the period-performance movement and has always run alongside it. Leaving the orchestra this summer after nine years in charge, Jukka-Pekka Saraste has placed his stone on that cairn with his first complete cycle of the nine symphonies.

Like his predecessors, Saraste programmes Beethoven alongside 20th-century modernists: Schoenberg, Webern, Ligeti. Unlike his more radical contemporaries, he builds a profile of the composer as a reluctant revolutionary, with a dense, post-Wagnerian body of sound built up from the solid foundations of a well-defined bass section. Saraste keeps this bass in check for the Classically proportioned members of the cycle, Nos 1, 2, 4 and 8, reducing it to three or four instruments. Divided violins cut across each other, hard-sticked timpani slice through *tuttis* and incisive solo winds lead the argument. The Fourth is especially impressive, alive to all the adoptions and subversions of 18th-century manners.

As the scale of Beethoven's formal ambitions expands, however, the focus of each performance suffers. They were recorded under studio conditions in two week-long bursts, and signs of haste manifest themselves especially in the later session covering the last four

symphonies through slips of ensemble and coordination. Saraste's 'Storm' is much the most engaging section of an otherwise impatient and ill-balanced *Pastoral*. The mid-range is flooded with bass and what was dense becomes clotted. The instincts remain sound: this is thick-set if sometimes muscle-bound Beethoven of a kind more familiar half a century ago, voiced with a lively and relaxed directorial intelligence that's much more appreciable in the concert films of the cycle available to view free of charge at the orchestra's online media library. There, too, the recorded balance is closer and more analytical.

What I miss from the studio cycle is difference: not from competitors but one symphony from another. You would be hard-pressed to know the trombones had entered the room in the finale of the Fifth (though the piccolo certainly leaves his mark here and in the Ninth). The Scotch snap in the Scherzo of the Sixth is almost inaudible.

The *Adagio* of the Ninth flows along peaceably enough near the composer's metronome mark but its momentum is arrested by the kind of rhythmic mannerisms noted by RO when he addressed Saraste's 1988 *Eroica* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra (Virgin/Erato, 10/92). There is a large but backwardly balanced chorus for the finale and an uneven quartet of soloists: the outstanding contribution comes from the bass Tareq Nazmi, whom I so admired in Currentzis's Verdi Requiem (see page 123), and his declamation of 'O Freunde' suddenly demands attention in a way that too little else does in this set, for all its orthodox virtues.

Peter Quantrill

Ben-Haim

Violin Concerto^a. Evocation^a. Toccata^a.

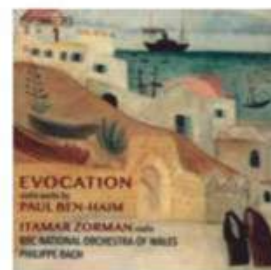
Berceuse sfaradite^b. Three Songs

Without Words^b. Three Studies

Itamar Zorman *vn* ^bAmy Yang *pf*

^aBBC National Orchestra of Wales / Philippe Bach

BIS (F) ⑤ BIS2398 (65' • DDD/DSD)



Leonard Bernstein's recording of *The Sweet Psalmist of Israel* helped to keep his name alive

but the music of Paul Ben-Haim (1897-1984), German-born though resident for over half a century in what became Israel, has made only limited headway with the wider public. Recent accounts of his two symphonies (CPO, A/17 – the First scheduled for this year's Proms) and of selected chamber music (Chandos, 9/13) certainly redressed the balance in recorded terms, and the present disc of his violin works with orchestra or piano widens this remit still further.

Evocation (1941) is the highlight here. The gently undulating introductory pages set the tone for the soloist's wistful main theme, its elegiac contours complemented by limpid harp- and woodwind-writing in the agitated central section, before a heightened resumption of earlier music brings a lithe cadenza and regretful close. Itamar Zorman offers committed advocacy here and in the Violin Concerto (1960), but this latter is a relative disappointment – its outer movements just a little too short-winded formally for a fully personal expression to emerge and the *Andante* an uneasy amalgam of interlude and fully fledged slow movement.

The shorter pieces here are no less characteristic – whether the elegant poise of *Three Songs Without Words* (1951) with their rootedness in Sephardic melody, *Three Studies* (1981) with their deftly inflected virtuosity or the melting harmonies of *Berceuse sfaradite* (1945). The idiomatic arrangement of a Toccata originally for piano (1943) makes for a spirited encore.

Zorman (who also contributes informative booklet notes) is ably accompanied by Amy Yang and the BBC NOW with Philippe Bach, while his take on the Violin Concerto is preferable to the hectoring account



Rhythmic swagger: Augustin Hadelich and Miguel Harth-Bedoya bring lyricism and virtuosity to Brahms and Ligeti

from Itzhak Perlman or slightly cautious approach of Michael Guttman. Those having investigated any of the discs above should certainly acquire this latest release.

Richard Whitehouse

Violin Concerto – selected comparisons:

Perlman, Israel PO, Mehta

(5/93^R) (WARN) 2564 61297-4

Guttman, LPO, Shallon (9/98) (ASV) CDDCA1038

Brahms • Ligeti

Brahms Violin Concerto, Op 77

Ligeti Violin Concerto

Augustin Hadelich *vn* **Norwegian Radio**

Orchestra / Miguel Harth-Bedoya

Warner Classics © 9029 55104-5 (72' • DDD)



Augustin Hadelich's performance of Brahms's Violin Concerto abounds

with subtle detail. Listen, for example, to the way he digs into his first phrases, showing tensile strength and sinew, then how little by little he softens and sweetens his tone leading into his first full statement of the main theme (at 4'29"). Hadelich has a sure sense of that vital Brahmsian ebb and flow, too. Indeed, his and

Miguel Harth-Bedoya's sense of tempo and pacing are sensible as well as sensitive throughout.

In this age of historically informed practice, I'm tempted to describe this as a resolutely traditional interpretation. There's a pleasing heft and mellow warmth to the Norwegian Radio Orchestra's sound, although they heat things up when the time is right – try, say, the first movement's molten central development section. The finale is notable both for its rhythmic swagger and for Hadelich's exceptionally articulate playing.

Hadelich has written his own cadenza, and perhaps it's the novelty, but I think I prefer it to Joachim's. It's brilliant yet serious and stylistically *echt*. Note how he slowly ratchets up tension, setting up the touching moment where the second theme floats *in alt* and unadorned.

The Ligeti Concerto is also given what might be described as a traditional reading, particularly if you've heard Patricia Kopatchinskaja's ferocious account – *Gramophone's* 2013 Record of the Year (Naïve, 12/12). Hadelich moves easily through the solo part's vertiginously shifting rhythms and herky-jerky accents, always seeming to reach for the long line. His propensity for finding lyricism in

unexpected places doesn't mitigate any of the music's visceral thrill, although he is somewhat let down by the orchestra; the NRO are very good but not nearly as confident or as characterful as Eötvös's Ensemble Modern for Kopatchinskaja or Boulez's Ensemble Intercontemporain with Saschko Gawriloff (DG, 1/95). The quartet of ocarinas in the Aria movement sounds almost normal here, for instance, not like an alien invasion, as on the other recordings.

Still, Hadelich has an final ace up his sleeve by using Thomas Adès's cadenza at the end – and, man, it's a doozy. Slyly humorous, acutely dramatic, jaw-dropping in its technical demands, and ultimately satisfying, both in the way he brings back ideas from previous movements (as if desperately tying up loose ends) and in creating a seamless segue that makes the abrupt falling-down-the-stairs coda feel inevitable. You've got to hear it.

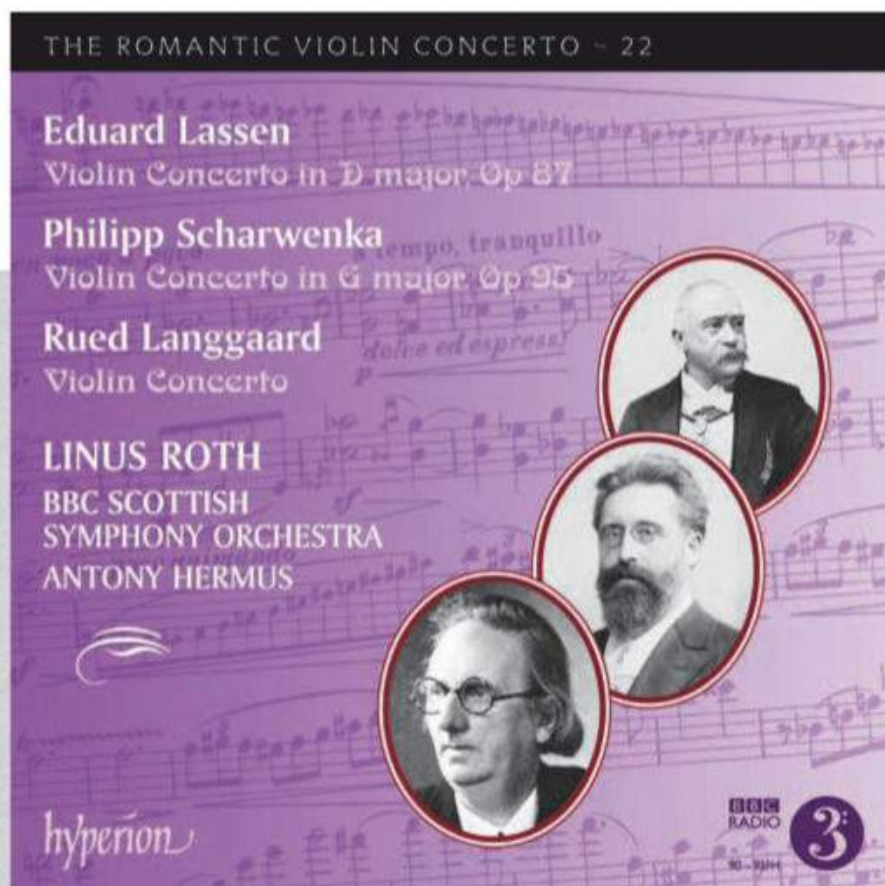
Andrew Farach-Colton

Braunfels

Fantastische Erscheinungen über ein Thema von Hector Berlioz, Op 25. Sinfonia brevis, Op 69 **Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz / Gregor Bühl**

Capriccio © C5354 (82' • DDD)

hyperion



Hyperion's Romantic Violin Concerto series reaches volume twenty-two with three real rarities. All receive the strongest advocacy from Linus Roth, who plays them like the repertoire pieces they may one day become.

CDA68268
Available Friday 31 May 2019

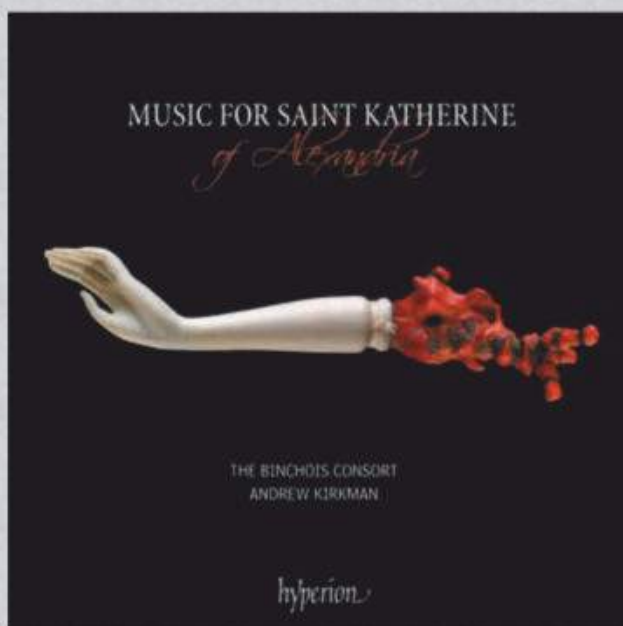
Lassen, Scharwenka & Langgaard: Violin Concertos

LINUS ROTH violin
BBC SCOTTISH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
ANTONY HERMUS conductor

A poignant, poetic evocation of the conjectural life and death of Saint Katherine in music and alabaster sculpture.

CDA68274
Available Friday 31 May 2019

Music for Saint Katherine of Alexandria
THE BINCHOIS CONSORT
ANDREW KIRKMAN conductor



The penultimate release in Angela Hewitt's cycle of the complete Beethoven piano sonatas takes in the 'Waldstein'.

CDA68220
Available Friday 31 May 2019

Beethoven: Piano Sonatas
Opp 2/1, 14/2, 53 & 54
ANGELA HEWITT piano



COMING SOON ...

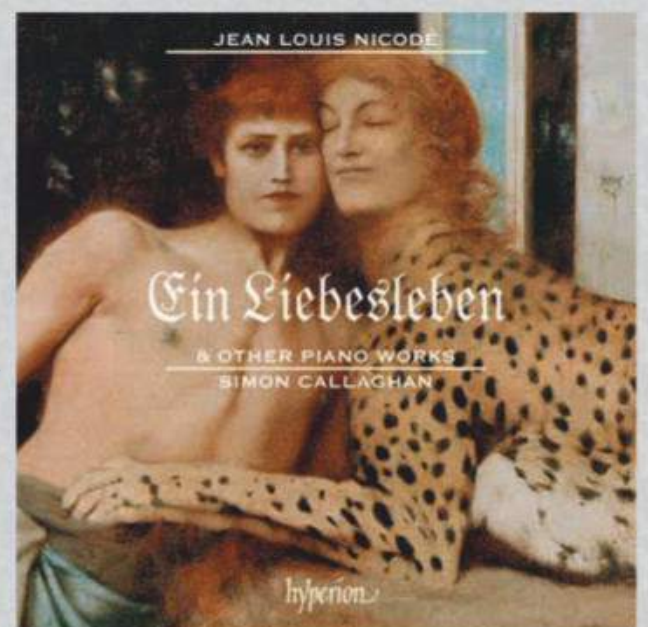
Sibelius: Kullervo BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Thomas Dausgaard (conductor)
Cramer: Piano Concertos Nos 4 & 5 Howard Shelley (piano), London Mozart Players, Howard Shelley (conductor)
Janáček: The diary of one who disappeared & other works Nicky Spence (tenor), Julius Drake (piano)
Parry: Piano Trio No 2 & Piano Quartet Leonore Piano Trio
Bach: The Toccatas Mahan Esfahani (harpsichord)
Mozart: The Jupiter Project David Owen Norris (piano) & friends
Stanford: A Song of Agincourt & other works Ulster Orchestra, Howard Shelley (conductor)



The name may be unknown, but Nicodé's brand of Romanticism proves irresistible in Simon Callaghan's persuasive accounts.

CDA68269
Available Friday 31 May 2019

Nicodé: Ein Liebesleben & other piano works
SIMON CALLAGHAN piano



OTHER LABELS AVAILABLE FOR
DOWNLOAD ON OUR WEBSITE

LSO
signum
CLASSICS

HALLÉ
THE CHOIR OF
KING'S COLLEGE
Gimell

MARIINSKY
Soy
Collegium

CDs, MP3 and lossless downloads of all our recordings are
available from ***www.hyperion-records.co.uk***

HYPERION RECORDS LTD, PO BOX 25, LONDON SE9 1AX · info@hyperion-records.co.uk · TEL +44 (0)20 8318 1234



Back in the 1990s, Walter Braunfels's 1920 opera *The Birds* was one of the most glorious rediscoveries in Decca's 'Entartete Musik' series. The Braunfels revival has built at a moderate pace since then, and it's surely a positive sign that neither of the works here is making its recorded debut, even if, as is claimed, this is the first recording of the *Fantastic Apparitions on a Theme of Hector Berlioz* to present the work complete.

And what an extraordinary work it is: a set of orchestral variations on the 'Song of the Flea' from Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust* which grew between 1914 and 1917 from a projected ballet score into a near-50-minute span of orchestral music that references Brahms, Beethoven and Wagner, as well as Berlioz himself. The most obvious parallel is with Reger's big sets of orchestral variations, or perhaps Braunfels's own *Don Juan*. Variation form is expanded far beyond breaking point to become, effectively, a single-movement symphony, complete with finale and a distinctly Mahlerian scherzo (this section is recorded here for the first time).

The performance lacks nothing in commitment or sense of long-range form, though you might find yourself hankering for a more luxurious string sound, slightly sharper characterisation of the individual episodes, and a recorded balance that gives the brass less severity and the bass less boom. Details do tend to get lost. The *Sinfonia brevis* has the pared-down, otherworldly mood familiar from the post-war works of fellow-Romantics like Dohnányi and Strauss. But it's charged with genuine pain, and while Gregor Bühl and his Rheinland-Pfalz orchestra serve it well, Johannes Wildner's more expansive account (Dutton, 8/15) still has the edge on playing and recorded sound.

Richard Bratby

Copland

Billy the Kid. Grohg

Detroit Symphony Orchestra / Leonard Slatkin
Naxos American Classics (M) 8 559862 (63' • DDD)



Copland's score for the ballet *Grohg* dates from the time of his studies with Nadia Boulanger in the early 1920s. Inspired by the German expressionistic horror film

Nosferatu, a loose adaption of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the ballet features a vampire who likes to raise the dead in order to dance with them. With little prospect of a performance, Copland arranged the opening *Cortège macabre* as a concert work and used some of the remaining material in his *Dance Symphony* (1928) and the ballet *Hear Ye! Hear Ye!* (1934). Although revised by the composer in 1932, the score was thought to be lost until a copy was found in the Library of Congress in the late 1980s by Oliver Knussen.

It's a strikingly assured composition, contrasting passages of menace, grotesquery, rambunctiousness and rhythmic complexity, albeit occasionally revealing an indebtedness to the works of Bartók, Schmitt and Stravinsky. Knussen's own 1992 recording with the Cleveland Orchestra on Argo (now Decca) is extraordinarily fine but Slatkin's incisive and powerful performance is also strongly recommendable. The recording quality of the Argo version, however, is considerably superior to the rather airless and hard-edged presentation of the orchestra on this Naxos release.

The original score of *Billy the Kid* features around 12 minutes of music omitted from the more familiar suite, including an attractive waltz towards the end of the ballet that depicts Billy with his girlfriend. The complete score has been recorded by a number of conductors, including Zinman, Litton and Slatkin himself (with the St Louis Symphony Orchestra). Slatkin's new version is as fine as any in terms of its execution, characterisation and involvement but once again the attractiveness of the performance is undermined by the dry and unsympathetic recording quality.

Christian Hoskins

Grohg – selected comparison:

Cleveland Orch, Knussen (10/94^R) (DECC) 478 4585DF2

Debussy • Stravinsky

Debussy *La mer*^a Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*^b

New York Philharmonic Orchestra /

Jaap van Zweden

Decca Gold (F) 481 7981 (60' • DDD)

Recorded live at David Geffen Hall, Lincoln Center, New York, ^bSeptember 20-23 & 25,

^aOctober 4-6, 2018



Jaap van Zweden took up his post as music director of the New York Philharmonic at the start of this season, an appointment which seeks to breathe

new life – and some much-needed fire – into an orchestra that could sometimes slump into mediocrity under Alan Gilbert. This disc features two works taken from concerts at the start of van Zweden's tenure: *The Rite of Spring* from his opening programme and *La mer* a few weeks later in October.

It's a disc that reveals the current qualities of the NY Phil: weighty brass that packs a punch; rounded woodwind tone, particularly principal clarinettist Anthony McGill; powerful strings. The orchestra also recorded *The Rite* under Gilbert in the 2012-13 season, released on its own label. Van Zweden's account is more exciting and marginally swifter – especially in Part 2 – but both are limited by the dry, dull acoustic of David Geffen Hall. The 'Augurs of Spring' are taken rather steadily and emphatically and the 'Ritual of the Rival Tribes' has plenty of weight. Zweden caresses the Introduction to Part 2, allowing the New York woodwinds room to breathe.

It's not as incisive as another of his predecessors, Leonard Bernstein on Sony, but this an enjoyable reading – and one you'd be very happy to encounter in the concert hall. Until, that is, you turn to van Zweden's previous recording with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, of which he was chief conductor from 2005 to 2012. Closely recorded on Exton, it's a *Rite* to rip your nerves, far more brutal than the New Yorkers in Stravinsky's savagery, particularly the explosive timpani.

Van Zweden's *La mer* is spacious and lacking in incident, painting Debussy's triptych with an Impressionist wash. There's some nice playing, particularly from the sweet-toned cellos (4'43") in the first movement, but the majesty of the noonday sun is limp. Bernstein's recording is tauter; but for a really scintillating seascape from the NY Phil, listen to them under Guido Cantelli in a 1954 concert, released for streaming on the orchestra's own Historic Broadcasts label. **Mark Pullinger**

The Rite of Spring – selected comparisons:

NYPO, Bernstein (SONY) ➔ 88883 70747-2

NYPO, Gilbert (NYPO) NYP20130101

Netherlands Rad PO, van Zweden

(EXTO) ➔ OVCL00312

La mer – selected comparison:

NYPO, Bernstein (SONY) ➔ SMK47546

Elfman

Violin Concerto, 'Eleven Eleven'^a. Piano Quartet^b

^aSandy Cameron ^{vn} ^bPhilharmonic Piano Quartet

Berlin; ^aRoyal Scottish National Orchestra /

John Mauceri

Sony Classical (F) 19075 86975-2 (65' • DDD)



In his booklet-note introduction to these stand-alone concert works Danny Elfman asks the question so often asked, namely why it is that audiences for movie music and classical music concerts are so markedly different when from a musical standpoint the two worlds coexist in so many ways. The answer, I feel sure, lies with 'associations'. Movie music fanatics are collectors at heart and at the root of their enthusiasm is the inescapable fact that they have something to hang their favourite scores on: an overriding narrative but equally specific scenes, images, moments. And the cues are generally shorter, pithier, less demanding than music developing in the abstract over longer spans.

Elfman is probably best known for his collaborations with the freaky talent that is Tim Burton. They are a supremely effective double-act, a meeting of minds, sensibilities and eccentricities that make them a perfect fit. Indeed, some of the capriciousness that makes Elfman chime so completely with Burton rubs off here. Mostly, though, these accomplished and entertaining pieces owe a lot (as do so many movie scores) to Elfman's self-confessed passion not just for the Romantic classical repertoire as a whole but specifically for the 20th-century Russians.

Shostakovich and Prokofiev loom large in the Violin Concerto *Eleven Eleven*. There is a distinctly Shostakovian sensibility in the inky lyricism of the opening bars, the bass line brooding over the second idea as the soloist spins arpeggios above. And then we're off into the *Animato* hand-in-hand with Prokofiev, whose spiky, mordant humour has much in common with Burton. Indeed, they behave like distant cousins.

Elfman gives his soloist Sandy Cameron plenty to exercise her (they first collaborated on the Cirque du Soleil show *Iris*) and the solo writing – not least in the cadenzas (gatecrashed in the motor second movement by the percussion section) – is propulsive and exhilarating. On the flipside of the coin is the darkly lyric minimalism of Shostakovich and I like the composerly way in which Elfman has the soloist emerge from the string oration at the start of the third movement 'Fantasma' (there's a movie-derived title if ever there was one), the four-note idea hooking us like the best film cues do.

I wouldn't want to imply that what Elfman is doing here is writing movie

music in all but name – not at all. But I would say that the development within the piece feels motivated by arbitrary changes of mood – as in 'what next?' – rather than something more organic. That said, the 'trip' is full of incident and the exhilarating climax of the finale shows his prowess and relish for the big gesture but also a deeper instinct by resisting the big finish and returning to the lachrymose beginnings of the piece.

In some ways the Piano Quartet (written at the request of players from the Berlin Philharmonic – now there's a compliment) feels more like a concert piece in a movie-free zone. Elfman's restless nature is still pervasive – indeed, it sometimes feels like a latter-day kind of *Kinderszenen*, with the sinister games of the second movement ('Kinderspott') typifying the child in Elfman. Sometimes I wish his music would just settle in one place and simply evolve. Paradoxically, the shortest movement, 'Ruhe' (1'40"), does just that – in microcosm. **Edward Seckerson**

Gounod

Symphonies - No 1; No 2

Iceland Symphony Orchestra /

Yan Pascal Tortelier

Chandos © CHSA5231 (62' • DDD/DSD)



'Write me symphonies like Beethoven's and I'll play them!' Jules Padeloup told Charles

Gounod. Nowadays, we associate the French composer with operas – principally *Faust* – and his kitschy reworking of Bach which ended up as the *Ave Maria*. His two symphonies, composed a few years before *Faust* hit the boards of Paris's Théâtre Lyrique, are rarely performed, which is something of a mystery. They're rarely recorded too, with perhaps Neville Marriner's with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields being the most prominent.

Judging by the relaxed cover photograph in front of Reykjavík's Harpa concert hall, Yan Pascal Tortelier is settled at the helm of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. Its chief conductor since 2016, he brings wit and charm to this delightful pair of works.

The First Symphony was composed in 1854-55, although Gounod drew on a work written in Rome a decade earlier as the opening movement. It is carefree and sunny in style and it's no surprise that it inspired Bizet, who arranged it for piano duet, to write his own Symphony in C. Haydn is a definite influence – breezy spirits, the 'wrong key' for the start of the second half

of the Minuet, the Trio with its musette-like drone – but there's Mendelssohn too, who encouraged Gounod, telling him not to bother with opera! There's a spring in Tortelier's step with the Icelanders, a sappy bounce to the opening *Allegro molto*. The *Allegretto moderato* trips along and the Scherzo has bucolic weight. There's a vitality about the ISO's finale which is even more winning than the ASMF's account, especially given the excellent Harpa acoustics. The strings are alert and light and the woodwinds attack Gounod's melodious writing with élan.

If Haydn is the influence on the First, it is Beethoven who looms large over the Second, more serious in tone with dramatic changes in dynamics and heavy *sforzando* markings. The *Adagio* introduction, in brooding E flat major, is Gounod's 'Eroica' moment, although the Frenchman cannot really bristle with anger to the same extent. Tortelier scores over Marriner here by observing exposition repeats and the Icelanders tackle it with relish. The aching string tone in the *Larghetto* is wonderful and the woodwinds propel the Scherzo along joyously. There's no Beethovenian *Sturm und Drang* for the finale, just Gallic *joie de vivre*, which makes one regret that Gounod never returned to the symphonic form again. **Mark Pullinger**

Selected comparison – coupled as above:

ASMF, Marriner (PHIL) 462 125-2PH

Leclair

Violin Concertos: Op 7 - No 2; No 6;

Op 10 - No 2; No 6

Leila Schayegh *vn*

La Cetra Baroque Orchestra, Basel

Glossa © GCD924202 (68' • DDD)



On this marvellous Leclair concerto programme Leila Schayegh plays

Nos 2 and 6 from each of Leclair's Opp 7 and 10 sets – which in the case of Op 7 are exactly the two concertos that Fabio Biondi didn't record on his recent Leclair album (also Glossa, 7/17). This makes for a sweet piece of symmetry to an album that has balance everywhere, and means that the two discs complement each other perfectly.

This begins with the ensemble instrumentalists using plain unwound gut strings for a nicely soft and dark sound over which the soloists, on silver-wound gut, can then bounce and glide in slightly more timbrally piquant fashion – soloists plural, because second violinist Sonoko Asabuki is as much a part of the gently virtuoso



Yan Pascal Tortelier and his Icelandic forces champion the neglected symphonies of Charles Gounod

picture in moments such as the slightly Vivaldian third-movement *Allegro* of Op 7 No 2 in D major. It continues with the dancing Italian buoyancy being kept always in check by a suitably elegantly French approach to overall expression (nothing too unbridled) and tempo (nothing too fast). Limpid textures are another draw; for a moment where all the above qualities come happily together, listen to Op 10 No 6's central major-key Aria, warmly stringy at the opening with just the solo violins, before blossoming out into velvety whole-ensemble fullness.

Schayegh herself is delectable in the single-soloist writing. For instance, hear the multicoloured delicacy and suppleness she brings to the subtle virtuosities of Op 10 No 2's opening *Allegro*, followed by the poetic rhetoric she brings to her rubato when the orchestra falls silent. Her self-written booklet notes are also possibly the most engaging and thoughtfully intelligent ones on Leclair I've yet read. In fact, if you're looking to own the complete Op 7 concertos you could do a lot worse than to pair the Schaylegh and Biondi; tunings-wise they are virtually identical (Schaylegh at 408Hz and Biondi at 407Hz), plus you also get the pleasure of the Op 10 pair.

Charlotte Gardner

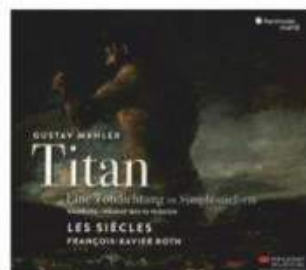
Mahler

'Titan'

Symphony No 1 (original version, 'Titan', incl Blumine)

Les Siècles / François-Xavier Roth

Harmonia Mundi © HMM90 5299 (57' • DDD)



For once the title does not deceive. Presented here is a version of the two-

part, five-movement symphonic poem which Mahler wrote within a few weeks early in 1888, then five years later named after the 1803 novel of Jean Paul and serially revised until its publication in 1899 as his First Symphony. As such it bears no comparison with François-Xavier Roth's 2011 recording of the symphony's final version (Hänssler, 6/12), tightened, reorchestrated and shorn of *Titan*'s 'Blumine' movement.

A version, nonetheless, it remains. With Mahler's original autograph apparently lost for ever, Roth conducts a new edition of *Titan* as revived by the composer in Hamburg in 1893 and Weimar a year later, the editorial state of the Budapest premiere score from 1889 being deemed intractable for performance.

In truth the revisions were not nearly so radical as those visited by the elderly Bruckner upon his first three numbered symphonies. The elision of tone poem and symphony belongs to the project of Mahler's work considered as a whole. Indeed, Roth's *Titan* may lead us to understand why the composer remained so attached to the First, conducting it more often than any of his others, despite what he claimed were its difficulties for an audience, exceeding the Fifth or even the Sixth. It's a tipping point for the symphony as a genre – a point underlined by Roth in concert (and available on YouTube) when he paired *Titan* with Franck's Symphony, composed the same year.

The recording also sticks a feather in the cap of Les Siècles, among the most adaptable and engaging of today's historically informed ensembles formed in the image of their director. I like the unapologetic weight of their *tutti* sonority in the outer movements (captured at performances in Paris, Nîmes and Soissons, though the joins and audiences don't show); the aviary of solo winds, the tinny clink of 'period' tam-tam, the sly and winning string portamentos.

I applaud, too, Roth's unabashed commitment to those passages of the

finale where Mahler himself later had second thoughts – deft and ingenious ones, to be sure, but thinning out its red blood cells in the process. Much of the nature-writing here is closer to the Weber of *Der Freischütz* than the Berlioz who would come to exercise so potent an influence on the mature composer. Just as any self-respecting Sibelian knows the original Fifth in the BIS recording, this new *Titan* is a required supplement to any decent-size Mahler library. **Peter Quantrill**

Pettersson

Violin Concerto No 2^a. Symphony No 17

^aUlf Wallin *vn* Norrköping Symphony

Orchestra / Christian Lindberg

BIS (F) BIS2290 (61' • DDD/DSO)



Michael Oliver described Pettersson's Second Violin Concerto (1977-79)

in these pages as 'perplexing but absorbing, infuriatingly chaotic but somehow unified by sheer eloquence', noting how in the original version Ida Haendel had to 'fight against a texture in which two or three strands of argument are continually interweaving'. That was the composer's intention, of course, in what is less a concerto than a symphony with solo violin. Pettersson's revised score (1980) lightened the orchestral string textures, as Isabelle van Keulen's recording a quarter of a century later confirmed.

What stands out most in its third recording is the sustained lyricism of this very long (53 minutes), intense and demanding meditation on one of Pettersson's own *Barefoot Songs*. He may have originally intended the soloist to be the orchestral leader, and the strong-toned Ulf Wallin – as commanding as Haendel and van Keulen – does seem slightly more integrated into the whole than his predecessors. Lindberg moulds the structure convincingly, driving the music forwards without overwhelming his soloist; the emergence of the song theme, *Cantando* (track 4), is magical. The result is less perplexing, just as absorbing and eloquent but not at all chaotic. BIS's crystal-clear recording enhances the lighter and more transparent textures still further.

Pettersson enthusiasts will be most excited by the coupling, the premiere recording of the seven-minute untitled fragment begun in the composer's final months and generally thought of as the opening of an unfinished Seventeenth Symphony. In this performing edition,

made by Lindberg with Pettersson expert Markus Brylka, it feels exactly like the exposition and initial development of a symphony. Thoroughly engrossing, its sudden finish is dismaying but it is wonderful to hear this final utterance in such an idiomatic account. Needless to say, the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra are on top form; no one plays Pettersson like them! **Guy Rickards**

Violin Concerto – comparative versions:

Haendel, Swedish RSO, Blomstedt

(4/81) (CAPR) CAP21 359

van Keulen, Swedish RSO, Dausgaard

(4/07) (CPO) CPO777 199-2

Prokofiev • Walton • Vaughan Williams

Prokofiev Violin Concerto No 1, Op 19^a

Vaughan Williams The Lark Ascending^b

Walton Viola Concerto^c

Isabelle van Keulen ^{ab}*vn/va*

NDR Radiophilharmonie / ^bAndrew Litton,

^aAndrew Manze, ^cKeri-Lynn Wilson

Challenge Classics (F) CC72793 (63' • DDD)

^{ac}Recorded live at the Grosser Sendesaal,

Landesfunkhaus NDR, Hanover,

^cMarch 12-13, 2015; ^aMarch 5-9, 2018



Having recorded Prokofiev's complete works for violin and piano with Ronald

Brautigam (Challenge Classics, 5/13), Isabelle van Keulen might have been expected to pair the violin concertos. Instead she takes a bravely unconventional approach to programming with this latest release. Attempting to tie things together, her own booklet note makes a virtue of Walton's indebtedness to Prokofiev and draws in *The Lark* too: 'In the end, all three works ... return to their opening; all of them are works without any theatrics, without pretensions; they dissolve as it were into nothingness, they complete the circle.' Never mind that Prokofiev without theatrics sounds somewhat implausible: perhaps we shouldn't take her too literally.

The First Violin Concerto, the piece van Keulen learnt for her Concertgebouw debut when still in her teens, receives a fresh and imaginative performance, the soloist's slender, slightly metallic timbre and occasionally self-conscious phrasing offsetting any tendency to glib romanticism. The Scherzo is characterful, initially at the expense of absolute security, the outer movements prone to take stock rather than flowing freely as some do, looking rather for the music

between the notes. It helps that Andrew Manze elicits such pristine textures from his own Hanover band despite the recording venue's rather generous acoustic.

The Walton, though firmly projected with few if any moments of strain, is likelier to disappoint. Tempos are moderate, eschewing either the withdrawal into slow-motion rapture exemplified by Yuri Bashmet with André Previn (RCA, 3/99) or the zippier drive of James Ehnes and Edward Gardner (Chandos, 6/18). Nor is there much in the way of productive interplay between soloist and orchestra. Michael Kennedy described Walton's epilogue as 'sensuous yet full of uncertainty'. While the Challenge Classics team raise their game hereabouts, the work's curious mix of despondency and dash tends to elude the players.

Things look up interpretatively speaking with *The Lark Ascending*, the only one of the three scores to have been recorded without a live audience but with nothing studied or anonymous about it. The silvery protagonist is less somnolent than many rivals, the orchestral contribution wholly sympathetic if at times overbearingly loud – did something go awry in the control room? What was always going to be a mixed bag turns out to be a mixed blessing.

David Gutman

Rachmaninov

Symphony No 1, Op 13^a.

The Isle of the Dead, Op 29^b

London Philharmonic Orchestra /

Vladimir Jurowski

LPO (M) LPO0111 (65' • DDD)

Recorded live at the Royal Festival Hall, London,

^bOctober 3, 2014; ^aDecember 14, 2016



The Isle of the Dead might be regarded as the makeweight here but it has long been a

Jurowski speciality and, unless you insist on the sensationally doom-laden, heavy-footed approach of late-career Evgeny Svetlanov (BBC, 1/08 et al), there should be plenty to enjoy. The surprising iridescence of Rachmaninov's sonic palette is brilliantly conveyed and the rather pressed treatment of the imploring element in the central part of the work, just when the soul might seem to be grieving for what is lost, accords with the composer's own wish for a big dramatic contrast. The sound, captured live in a discreetly enhanced Royal Festival Hall, works very well indeed and this version



Alexandre Kantorow is joined by the Tapiola Sinfonietta in sparkling accounts of Saint-Saëns's piano concertos – see review on page 48

certainly ranks high among available alternatives, including one featuring the same forces (LPO, 7/05). Rather meanly, the packaging does not include Arnold Böcklin's painting in any of its guises. Rachmaninov is said to have preferred it in black-and-white although his music suggests otherwise.

Jurowski inherited Svetlanov's old Moscow-based orchestra in 2011 and one can imagine his distinguished predecessor warming a little more to this interpretation of the symphony. Pacing and dynamics tend to be more 'extreme' and elements such as its final rhetorical pay-off acquire a certain Soviet-Russian heft. The notes tend to vary from performance to performance, the score having been reconstructed from parts rediscovered after Rachmaninov's death. The climax of the first-movement development section always used to come with the glockenspiel still favoured by Zoltán Kocsis (BMC, 11/04). Vladimir Ashkenazy (Signum, 10/17 and elsewhere) is balder. Jurowski has no bells but smothers the line with clashing cymbals. Perhaps you won't be bothered by the triangle's incessant tinkling in the Scherzo. It's partly (though only partly) that the sound engineering is drier and less

consistent than usual from this source. We seem to be in a smaller hall and the ever-present percussion is either muffled in post-production (try the decidedly weird Tchaikovskian crash at 5'24" in the first movement) or left unconstrained; the gong-strokes at the close of the symphony are way over the top. Svetlanov himself could get away with it but that was 50 years ago (Alto, 8/69).

I should stress again, however, that Jurowski turns in a splendid *Isle of the Dead* and you may find the symphony's sonic oddities less distracting than I did. That said, while Kocsis's Hungarian National Philharmonic is a less obviously glossy ensemble, his crisper, tighter way with the score banishes doubts about its staying power, as do Ashkenazy's more 'central' readings, whether from Amsterdam, Sydney or London. Jurowski fails to avoid the suspicion of bombast which is perhaps what led the composer to withdraw the piece in the wake of its famously disastrous premiere. He did make a piano duet arrangement for publication so, as with Shostakovich's Fourth and much else in life, the official explanations don't quite ring true. Applause is excised after both works.

David Gutman

Rands

Piano Concerto^a. Music for Shoko: Aubade^b.

Canti del sole^c

^cStephen Chaundy *ten* ^bRobert Walters *cor ang*

^bStephen Rose, ^bJeffrey Zehngut *vns* ^bJoanna

Patterson Zakany *va* ^bCharles Bernard *vc*

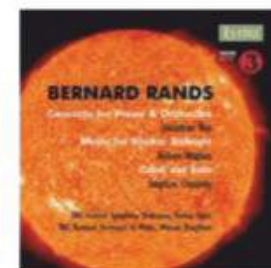
^aJonathan Biss *pf* ^cBBC National Orchestra of

Wales / William Boughton; ^aBBC Scottish

Symphony Orchestra / Markus Stenz

Lyrta © SRCD379 (62' • DDD • T/t)

^aRecorded live at the Royal Albert Hall, London, August 15, 2014



It's weeks since I reviewed the last disc of orchestral music by Bernard Rands. No,

I hadn't heard of him either. But this flurry of exposure for Rands on record evidently has little to do with establishment back-slapping and everything to do with music of originality, honesty and distinction that we should be hearing more of even though the composer hasn't lived in Britain for nearly half a century.

Rands describes his music as 'colloquial rather than oratorical', which you might say translates into works that appear to have a light touch but which are filled with

rigour and discipline and clarity yet operate on a multitude of levels. Nono, Berio and Dallapiccola are totem figures. There is something of Messiaen's care with sonority in Rands's Piano Concerto (particularly the slow movement), which is obvious in its etching and yet altogether not obvious in all that it reveals over time. This performance from the 2014 Proms brings out its brittle, louche, atmospheric and lyrical-Italian feeling nicely, from Biss's sure hands to the low-slung orchestral pizzicatos.

Canti del sole is a continuous journey through 14 poems, in two sets of seven, which chart the progress of a day from dawn to dusk. The poems, in four languages, are mostly from the Romantic big guns and while that brings the feeling of a patchwork, the music urges its way through any residual incongruity. In a premonition of the later Piano Concerto's opening Fantasia, the piece grows ever more musically and philosophically complex before fading and disappearing. The tenor's lyrical line belies the tensile churn of the large orchestra underneath, even if Stephen Chaundy's performance here tends towards the railing and wound-up, as lustrous as his voice is. Perhaps because of that, the work seems to cry out for an orchestra-only breakout, either in screeching release or slackened repose. We get that, kind of, in the filler: *Music for Shoko: Aubade*, an arrangement of the middle movement of Rands's Cor anglais Concerto in which those moments of tranquillity duly arrive. But they never stay for long. Rands has deeper things to say.

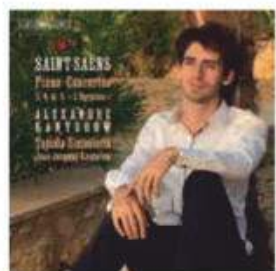
Andrew Mellor

Saint-Saëns

Piano Concertos – No 3, Op 29;
No 4, Op 44; No 5, 'Egyptian', Op 103

Alexandre Kantorow *pf*

Tapiola Sinfonietta / Jean-Jacques Kantorow
BIS (F) BIS2300 (81' • DDD/DSD)



It is no hardship to review yet another Saint-Saëns piano concerto recording when it is as good as this, and one which, moreover, has managed to accommodate these three on a single disc lasting a generous 80'37", a first for these particular works, so far as I know.

The soloist is the young (b1997) son of the distinguished violinist-conductor and, believe me, he is the real deal – a fire-breathing virtuoso with a poetic charm and innate stylistic mastery, as anyone will

confirm who has heard his Liszt concertos (A/15) and, on his 'À la Russe' disc (7/17), an *Islamey* which is among the finest ever recorded.

One hardly needs to be told, listening to the opening of Op 29, that it was inspired by an Alpine torrent, so beautifully conjured is it by Kantorow *père et fils* and the Tapiola players, a passage which also immediately establishes the ideal balance between piano and orchestra – a further plus for this recording (tip of the hat to producer Jens Braun and sound engineer Martin Nagorni). 'Prodigiously uneven' though the Third Concerto may be (in the opinion of Alfred Cortot), this team papers over the cracks and the exuberant high spirits of the finale, as bracing as a splash of cold mountain water, are hard to resist.

Arguably the greatest of the five concertos, No 4 sets out on an uncertain journey, improvisatory, discursive, as if trying out and then discarding certain themes and ideas before pulling them all together in the second half. It begins, like the famous *Organ* Symphony (No 3), written a decade later, in C minor and ends in a triumphant C major. I had forgotten just how demanding is some of the piano-writing (for example, several passages of rapid sixths or thirds played simultaneously in both hands) but I have rarely heard it delivered with such commanding ease and infectious delight.

For further evidence of Kantorow's skill, listen to the first few minutes of the Fifth Concerto and you'll hear soufflé-light *leggierissimo* scale passages contrasted with *fortissimo* octaves of penetrating depth and weight. Yes, they are in the score but you will rarely hear them delineated as well as this. The exotic second movement, with its references to various musical genres – a Nubian love song, a gamelan, a Spanish guitar – is, again, among the best on disc and in fact my only quibble about the whole recording is the unmarked *accelerando* through the coda which renders the peroration inappropriately lightweight, a concern which does not disqualify it from sitting beside Hough (Hyperion, 11/01) and Darré (in all three), Cortot (in No 4) and Chamayou (in No 5 – Erato, 10/18).

Jeremy Nicholas

Saint-Saëns

Symphonies – No 2, Op 55; 'Urbs Roma'.
Danse macabre^a

^aMadeline Adkins *vn*

Utah Symphony Orchestra / Thierry Fischer
Hyperion (F) CDA68212 (73' • DDD)



Why do Saint-Saëns's youthful symphonies get such a bad rap? Even

Roger Nichols apologises more than is necessary for *Urbs Roma* in his otherwise enlightening booklet note. Yes, the level of invention in the first movement is not consistently sustained, but what it lacks in inevitability it makes up for in structural soundness and clarity. The slow movement could benefit from some pruning, sure, but how marvellously atmospheric it is. Indeed, I find the marriage of colourful, Berliozian language with the stark, spiritual sobriety of the 'Marcia funebre' from Beethoven's *Eroica* utterly endearing. And the theme-and-variations finale needs no apology whatsoever. I'm certain Elgar would have smiled at the first variation, and the third sounds downright Brahmsian, although it predates the *Haydn* Variations by nearly two decades.

If *Urbs Roma* has its longeurs, the A minor Symphony is concise almost to a fault. The slowly lilting *Adagio* is so lovely I wish it were at least three times longer than its three-and-a-half minutes, while the Scherzo takes us on a memorably wild and thrilling ride.

As in their superb account of the *Organ* Symphony (1/19), Thierry Fischer and the Utah Symphony's performances here are polished and graciously articulate. Fischer doesn't drive nearly as hard as Jean-Jacques Kantorow (BIS) in either symphony, favouring poise and charm over heat and bite. There's exhilaration, too, mind you – in the quicksilver finale of the A minor Symphony, for example, Fischer and the orchestra show they can turn on a dime.

The *Danse macabre* moves with an elegant yet persistent impetus; listening, one feels impelled to keep moving. Madeline Adkins plays the solo violin part alluringly yet with a slightly devilish edge to her tone. The entire programme is recorded with crystalline clarity in a natural, airy concert-hall perspective. I'm already craving the next instalment.

Andrew Farach-Colton

Schubert

'Early Symphonies and Stage Music'

Symphonies – No 1, D82; No 2, D125; No 3, D200.
Overture in the Italian Style, D590. Rosamunde –
Incidental Music, D797

Copenhagen Philharmonic Orchestra /
Lawrence Foster

Pentatone (M) (2) PTC5186 655 (128' • DDD/DSD)



Pentatone returns to Schubert's youthful symphonic output just a matter of months after its issue of the B'Rock Orchestra's disc of Nos 1 and 6 (2/19) – the sort of A&R scheduling clash that can only be the result of a series of meetings at the highest level. No matter, for the two sets are different enough: period vs modern instruments, for a start, and directorship from two musicians, René Jacobs and Lawrence Foster, whose respective outlooks might not be considered to overlap very much.

Foster, for example, doesn't go in for Jacobs's extremes of tempo. That doesn't mean that these aren't lithe, responsive performances. Strings are well drilled, woodwind chatty and personable. Foster knows how he wants this music to go and communicates his vision to his players. The gradual diminishing of Schubert's reliance on the examples of Haydn and Mozart is traced well from First Symphony to Third; and, even against the constant presence of Beethoven, Schubert's individual voice – absolutely there right from the beginning – gains in strength and confidence.

The perkiness of the Third's woodwind solos carries over into the conscious *italianità* of the Rossini-influenced Overture, D590. The synthesis is represented by the three entr'actes and two ballet musics from the incidental music to *Rosamunde*. Is this the start of a cycle to run alongside B'Rock's and complement Herreweghe's for the same label? It's more than adequately played and Pentatone's sound is sympathetic to players and music alike, so a continuation from these quarters into Schubert's symphonic maturity will be interesting to hear. **David Threasher**

Schumann • Glière • Saint-Saëns

Glière Horn Concerto, Op 91

Saint-Saëns Morceau de concert, Op 94

Schumann Konzertstück, Op 86^a. Adagio and Allegro, Op 70 (orch Ansermet)

Markus Maskuniitty, ^aMonica Berenguer Caro,

^aKristofer Öberg, ^aMartin Schöpfer *hns*

Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra /

Sakari Oramo

Online (F) ODE1339-2 (59' • DDD)



Markus Maskuniitty began his orchestral career as first horn in the Gustav Mahler

GRAMOPHONE *talks to ...*

Thierry Fischer

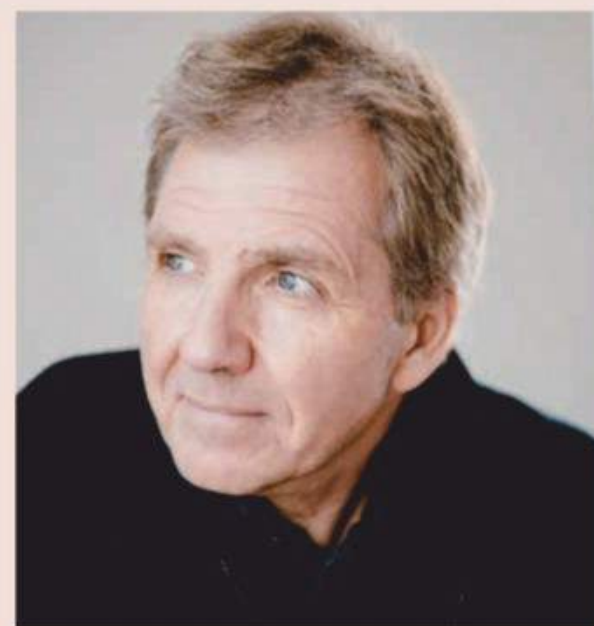
The conductor talks about discovering Saint-Saëns with the Utah Symphony Orchestra

Although the *Organ* Symphony (No 3) is well known, Saint-Saëns's other symphonies are rarely heard. Why do you think this is?

Saint-Saëns was 51 years old when he wrote the famous *Organ* Symphony. The other four symphonies are early works, and are invaluable treasures, offering both musical delight and understanding of Saint-Saëns's utopian music writing. They are a feast of effervescence and fresh ideas.

With the Utah Symphony, we decided to perform and record the entire cycle in one season, and so had the privilege – symphony by symphony, month after month – to experience the evolution of Saint-Saëns's personality. We went from surprise to surprise: from the sparkling A major Symphony and the blazing Symphony No 1, both teenage works, through *Urbs Roma* and the bright and dramatic Symphony No 2, to the much later, monumental *Organ* Symphony. It is a total mystery to me why the early symphonies have been almost completely neglected. They are so full of refinement and sensitivity, and they deserve to be heard.

***Urbs Roma* won the composer a competition but wasn't published until 1974. Did Saint-Saëns disown it?**



We know that Saint-Saëns thought so little of the piece that he simply didn't want it to be published. He was somebody who tried all his life to impose his ideas on people unprepared to receive them, so this is perhaps not surprising. I believe he simply forgot about it, without any frustration.

Was this music new to the players of the Utah Symphony? How did they take to it?

All the symphonies, except the *Organ*, were completely new to the orchestra. At first the musicians approached the music with the professionalism one would expect, but they quickly relished the mixed pleasures they discovered, from ravishing to dazzling.

What are your future recording plans with the Utah Symphony?

We have recorded a Berlioz abum (including *Symphonie fantastique*), which will appear after the final Saint-Saëns disc. Then the plan is to record Messiaen's *Des canyons aux étoiles*.

Jugendorchester. Since then, he's served as principal in the Finnish Radio Symphony, DSO Berlin and Berlin Philharmonic, and – since 2007 – the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra. His sound is glorious, with a tight core of vibrato encased in burnished mellowness.

Maskuniitty is joined by three of his colleagues from the RSPO's horn section for Schumann's *Konzertstück*. Together, the four soloists make a pleasingly bright and buzzy sound, and their ensemble is impeccable. Oramo sets an ideal tempo for the opening *Lebhaft*, providing plenty of rhythmic drive without any of the breathlessness one hears in, say, Tennstedt's (EMI, 8/93) or Paavo Järvi's (RCA) accounts. In the Stockholmers' hands, the central Romanze is a marvellously evocative sylvan nocturne and the finale bounces along vigorously.

It's a tremendously exciting reading at times – listen at 2'06" to how thrillingly the quartet surge ahead.

The shorter solo works are rousing, too. Schumann's *Adagio and Allegro* (originally for horn and piano but given here in Ernest Ansermet's effective orchestration) is equally ardent in both its halves. And I love how lustily Maskuniitty and the orchestra dig into the outer movements of Saint-Saëns's *Morceau de concert* – an attractively tuneful concerto-in-miniature – yet I'm even more impressed by how longingly he lingers on lyrical phrases in the sliver of a slow movement, tapering the tail-ends until they seem to evaporate.

Glière's Concerto was composed in 1951, although you might guess it was written at least 50 years earlier. The composer supposedly modelled it on Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, although

the first two movements sound much closer to Strauss – try, for instance, the rapturous passage near the end of the *Allegro* (beginning at 9'28") – and only the finale has a noticeably Russian accent. Maskuniitty revels in the music's melodic and colouristic opulence, and is supported affectionately by Oramo and the orchestra. This entire programme is an absolute delight. **Andrew Farach-Colton**

CP Stamitz

Ten Symphonies

Amadeus Ensemble / Normann Kästner

Auris Subtilis (M) ② ASC5083 (156' • DDD)



Carl Philipp Stamitz (1745-1801) was the scion of a Bohemian musical family that

reached its peak in the mid- and late 18th century. His father, Johann Antonin, was a pioneering symphonist and one of the architects of the Mannheim court orchestra during its pomp under the Elector Carl Theodor. Carl Philipp studied in Mannheim and performed as a second violinist in the orchestra but travelled incessantly from 1770 as far afield as Paris, London and St Petersburg. He composed over 50 symphonies plus numerous concertos and *symphonies concertantes*, and a comparable amount of chamber music.

These 10 symphonies – all apparently recorded here for the first time – seem to date mainly from a relatively settled period in Paris from about 1772 but display all the sound effects and melodic charm that typify the Mannheim style. Expect steamrollers (Op 9 No 2's finale or No 6's opening *Allegro assai*), dynamic contrasts and *cantabile* slow central movements (the muted string melody over a viola pedal and pizzicato bass in Op 13 No 2). Variety is provided by substituting flutes (Op 9 No 4 and Op 24 No 2) or clarinets (Op 15 No 1) for the otherwise standard oboes.

The music in itself is fascinating in the way that clear influences on Mozart and other composers of the period may be heard. Normann Kästner writes that this recording was his 'heart's desire'. The listener, however, may desire more: now that period-instrument groups are playing the music of this period with an accuracy and drive of compelling near-perfection, the ensemble (ragged within as well as between sections), tuning (sour verging on the acidic) and sluggish approach to tempo markings such as *allegro con spirito* and *presto assai* mean that this generously filled, handsomely packaged set is rather a

missed opportunity. Stamitz may be no Mozart but he deserves better.

David Threasher

R Strauss

Burleske^a. Duett-Concertino^b. Romanze^c.

Violin Concerto^d

^bJulie Price ^{bn}^dTasmin Little ^{vn}^aMichael McHale
pf BBC Symphony Orchestra / Michael Collins ^{bc}^{cl}
Chandos (E) CHAN20034 (77' • DDD)



The four concertante works that feature on this recording under the direction of the clarinettist and conductor Michael Collins include the very first and last that Strauss wrote. The *Romanze* for clarinet and orchestra (not to be confused with the slightly later *Romanze* for cello and orchestra) was completed when Strauss was 15 in 1879. The work's technical assurance reflects the considerable number of works already written by the industrious young composer as well as his interest in Mozart, but the melodic invention is not yet especially original or distinctive. Nevertheless, it's fascinating to hear the music of the developing composer brought to life in this dedicated performance by Collins.

A considerable advance in Strauss's ambition and achievement is apparent in the Violin Concerto from three years later. Some 30 minutes long, the concerto is indebted to Mendelssohn, among others, but offers a rewarding listen on its own terms with imaginative and often heartfelt writing for both soloist and orchestra. Ulf Hoelscher's pioneering recording with Kempe is an essential listen but Little's interpretation is wonderfully sympathetic and the accompaniment under Collins is first-class.

Four years separate the Violin Concerto and the *Burleske*, a work described by the late Michael Kennedy as Strauss's first masterpiece. It's a piece that has received numerous recordings and I would not want to be without Kempe's vivid and extrovert account with Malcolm Frager. However, the playing of the BBC SO under Collins is similarly impassioned and the pianist Michael McHale offers a splendidly virtuosic performance.

The *Duett-Concertino*, Strauss's final work in the genre, also receives a lovely performance. Both Collins and the bassoonist Julie Price offer characterful performances in this warm and nostalgic piece from the composer's old age, with its echoes of the operas *Capriccio* and *Daphne*,

and the string-playing is attractively crisp and expressive. All four works are superbly recorded. **Christian Hoskins**

Violin Concerto, *Burleske* – selected comparison:

Staatskapelle Dresden, Kempe (12/92^R) (WARN) 431780-2

J Williams

'Celebrating John Williams'

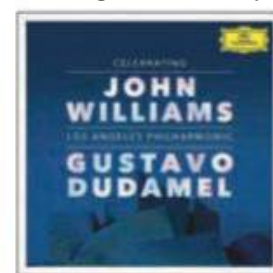
Olympic Fanfare and Theme and selections from Close Encounters of the Third Kind, ET the Extra Terrestrial, Harry Potter, Hook, Indiana Jones, Jaws, Jurassic Park, Memoirs of a Geisha, Schindler's List, Star Wars and Superman

Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra /

Gustavo Dudamel

DG (E) (two discs for the price of one) 483 6647GH2 (95' • DDD)

Recorded live at Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, January 24-27, 2019



This pair of CDs was recorded live earlier this year to celebrate the music of John

Williams and the centenary of the Los Angeles PO. Beginning with *Star Wars* (1977), it offers a substantial feast of music-making of the highest calibre, as one would expect from this orchestra under their conductor Gustavo Dudamel. Although the LAPO are seldom credited on a soundtrack (Ernest Gold's *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* is an exception), these players have this music coursing through their blood, as it did for their former music director, Esa-Pekka Salonen, on a Bernard Herrmann CD (Sony, 1/97).

This is a big orchestra for a big occasion and the DG engineers capture and blend it in a natural manner, never missing a detail, as borne out by glittering selections from *Harry Potter*, which are a joy to hear in these elegant, beautifully shaped performances. Dudamel's love of the music and his grip on the form is never in doubt, tricky transitions flowing seamlessly, his players responding to an *accelerando* with an adrenalin rush, and suspension in an unfolding drama given full measure by the observation of a pause, as in the coda to *ET*.

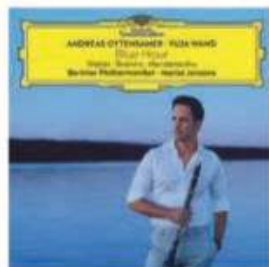
The theme from *Schindler's List* is a familiar one but listen out for a worthy companion in 'Sayuri's Theme' from *Memoirs of a Geisha*, especially as played by cellist Robert deMaïne, who makes an eloquent plea for the heroine's subjection. 'Out to Sea/Shark Cage Fugue', a brilliant composition from *Jaws*, navigates counterpoint and fugue in jovial fashion with menacing brass interjections. Not since Bligh's *Bounty* set sail on the briny in Bronisław Kaper's music for *Mutiny on the*

Bounty (1962) have nautical breezes blown so freely.

The advantages of live recording are displayed in another action piece, a blistering account of the 'Scherzo for Motorcycle and Orchestra' from *Indiana Jones*. In *Jurassic Park* the theme is given a noble profile. 'Throne Room and Finale' – a big tease if ever there was one, with the composer delaying the return of the *Star Wars* theme for a March in the Walton style – is every bit as uplifting as one remembered. In the big set pieces, 'Adventures on Earth' from *ET* and *Close Encounters*, the orchestra enjoy themselves unashamedly, the strings investing the big tunes with so much warmth. 'Flight to Neverland' from *Hook*, which occupies a mere 45 seconds on screen, is given a rhapsodic treatment that is simply spellbinding. This is a five-star celebration and a thanksgiving for a composer newly restored to health. **Adrian Edwards**

'Blue Hour'

Brahms Intermezzo, Op 118 No 2^a. *Wie Melodien zieht es mir*, Op 105 No 1^a **Mendelssohn** Seven Songs Without Words^a **Weber** Clarinet Concerto No 1, Op 73^b. Grand Duo concertant, Op 48^a **Andreas Ottensamer** cl^a **Yuja Wang** pf^b **Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra** / **Mariss Jansons** DG © 483 6069GH (62' • DDD)



The title 'Blue Hour' is meant to convey that post-sunset glow before nightfall and

might well conjure up a mood of relaxation and intimacy. If so, the arrangements of late Brahms for clarinet and piano on Andreas Ottensamer's programme fit the bill. But with two Weber works – the First Clarinet Concerto and the *Grand Duo concertant* – as its focus, and scattered with arrangements of Felix Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*, perhaps the thrust of this new release should be the clarinet as human voice.

The second movement of Weber's concerto certainly has the quality of an operatic aria here, Ottensamer pouring liquid gold into the *bel canto* phrases, interjected with more declamatory passages of recitative. Ottensamer comes from a great Viennese clarinet dynasty and his late father, Ernst, had a leaner but sweeter tone quality, his tempos more relaxed. The outer movements are purposeful, Ottensamer rock-solid but rather lacking in character, especially placed alongside the inimitable Martin Fröst (BIS), who displays far more

humour in the cheeky Rondo. The weighty Berlin Philharmonic sound also cannot compete with the *Sturm und Drang* punch delivered by the Tapiola Sinfonietta for Fröst. But Ottensamer is preferable to the turbocharged sound of his Berlin Phil predecessor Sabine Meyer, recorded with the Staatskapelle Dresden.

Ottensamer's partner for the rest of the disc is pianist Yuja Wang and the two enjoy a lively dialogue in Weber's *Grand Duo*. They spur each other on in the *Allegro con fuoco* first movement, while the central movement takes on the mood of a melancholy canzonetta, the clarinet almost sobbing its response before the carefree Rondo rattles along to close.

The Mendelssohn and Brahms numbers (all but one in arrangements by Ottensamer himself) make for pleasant listening. It's here, with both players spinning out the melodic lines luxuriantly and breathing as one, that you sense the late-night mood the 'Blue Hour' title promises. **Mark Pullinger**

Weber Clarinet Concerto No 1 – selected comparisons:

S Meyer, Staatskapelle Dresden, Blomstedt

(9/86^R) (WARN) 2564 60758-9

E Ottensamer, Czecho-Slovak St PO, Wildner

(7/91) (NAXO) 8 550378

Fröst, Tapiola Sinfonietta, J-J Kantorow

(2/07) (BIS) BIS-SACD1523

30th ANNIVERSARY

“NMC has become a national treasure and is an indispensable part of our history and our future: long may it flourish!” **Sir Simon Rattle (NMC Patron)**

Spark Catchers

NMC D250

Works by **Errollyn Wallen, James Wilson, Hannah Kendall, Daniel Kidane, Philip Herbert, and Julian Joseph.**

Chineke! Orchestra & Chorus
Roderick Williams *baritone* · Anthony Parnter, Kevin John Edusei, Wayne Marshall *conductors*
CD | DL

Anniversary Cassette Mixtape

NMC DL3039

To mark our 30th Anniversary we have commissioned experimental producer/DJ **Beatrice Dillon** to delve into our back catalogue and create a 50-minute blended mix, including works by composers ranging from **Judith Weir** to **Kate Whitley, Benjamin Britten** to **Huw Watkins.**

This limited edition Mixtape Cassette is available at our On Tour Events. Also available to download/stream: www.nmcrec.co.uk/nmc30/mixtape

Boundaries

M.M02

Chieko Shiomi: *Boundary Music* (1963)
David Toop (Side A/Track 1)
Jan Hendrickse (Side A/Track 2)
Cath Roberts: *Off World · March of the Egos*
CUEE (Side B/Track 1 & 2)
VINYL | DL

multi.modal

Speak, Be Silent

HCR20

Works by Rebecca Saunders, Mirela Ivicevic, Anna Thorvaldsdottir, Chaya Czernowin, and Liza Lim
Riot Ensemble
CD | DL

HCR

Catalogue d'Emojis

BCR006

Michael Wolters & Paul Norman
Michael Wolters *voice* · Paul Norman *voice*
Cobalt Duo
CD | DL

BIRMINGHAM
RECORD
COMPANY

Support our 30th Anniversary Appeal

Help us reach our ambitious anniversary target of £50,000 from individual donors this year. Go to www.nmcrec.co.uk/NMC30/appeal or text **NMC10** to **70085** to donate £10*

‘Rest assured that your gifts are in the hands of people who care about living composers and new music’ **Bernard Rands** (NMC Composer)

*This costs £10 plus the cost of one standard rate text message.

@nmcrecordings

www.nmcrec.co.uk/nmc30
Registered Charity no. 328052

www.nmcrec.co.uk/other-labels

Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

'Horizon 9'

Eötvös Multiversum^a **Rijnvos** Amérique du nord^b **Roukens** Boundless (Homage to LB)^c **Tüür** Solastalgia^d

^aVincent Cortvrint *picc* ^aIveta Apkalna *org* ^aLászló Fassang *hammond org* **Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra** / ^dStéphane Denève, ^aPeter Eötvös, ^cAlan Gilbert, ^bGustavo Gimeno
RCO Live (Ⓢ) RCO18009 (85' • DDD/DSD)
Recorded live, ^bFebruary 2 & 3, ^cFebruary 8 & 9, ^aOctober 19 & 20, ^dDecember 6 & 7, 2017



The Royal Concertgebouw's 'Horizon' series

continues with this collection of relative hits and misses. It's unfortunate that these latter should both be centenary tributes to Bernstein, but Joey Roukens's *Boundless* is a true car crash. Its composer recites the clichés of 'anything goes' in the present but the Adams-lite post-minimalism of its outer movements is a poor excuse on any level, with the central one a reminder that ambient music should not preclude creative input.

At least Richard Rijnvos exudes a certain panache in his scoring, even if *Amérique du nord* emerges as less than the sum of its parts, Varèse, Bernstein and ultimately Dvořák all rubbing shoulders as the composer juggles them with audible relish. Rijnvos himself hardly features in any substantive sense – his 'lifts' neither integrated into nor galvanising the musical fabric but merely ensuring that this piece achieves its duration without asking overmuch of its creator.

Erkki-Sven Tüür's music is often most effective at first hearing but *Solastalgia* suggests real staying power, its composer's environmental concerns evident in the opposition between 'the one' and 'the many', hence the confrontation of piccolo and orchestra. Nor is their antagonism an unchanging one, the soloist taking on a greater presence as the discourse unfolds, even if any sense of Vincent Cortvrint having triumphed is belied by the introspective final gestures.

The highlight is *Multiversum*, Peter Eötvös's consideration of a parallel universe in what is essentially a double concerto, the organ and its Hammond alter ego placed either side of the auditorium with orchestral sections surrounding listeners from all sides. Its three movements recast classical archetypes from a subtly provocative angle, allowing for requisite emotional contrast and ensuring cumulative overall evolution – compositional tenets not to be gainsaid.

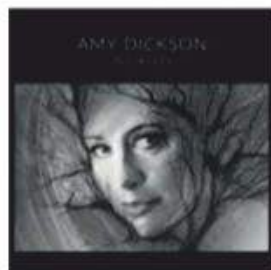
The performances here could hardly be faulted for their commitment, with the

wide-ranging SACD sound and overall presentation up to the consistently high standard of earlier releases in this valuable series. Quite what it says about contemporary Dutch music is another matter. **Richard Whitehouse**

'In Circles'

Anonymous Discovery **W Barton** Kalkadunga Yurdu^a **Brahms** Hungarian Dance No 4^b **R Edwards** Yanada^a **Falla** Jota^b **Nana** **Grainger** Shepherd's Hey **MacMillan** From Galloway. Saxophone Concerto^c **Pessard** Andalouse^b **Sculthorpe** Djilile^a **Traditional** She moved through the fair^a **Vaughan Williams** Six Studies in English Folk Song^b

Amy Dickson *sop/alto sax* ^a**William Barton** *didgeridoo* ^b**Daniel de Borah** *pf* ^c**Adelaide Symphony Orchestra** / **Nicholas Carter**
Sony Classical (Ⓢ) 19075 94469-2 (69' • DDD)
^cRecorded live



Amy Dickson's recordings seem to fall into two categories: new music, with a

focus on minimalists and composers from her native Australia, and programmes of lyrical miniatures. This release, which we're told 'celebrates the far-reaching influence of folk music', gives us a little of both.

I find the saxophonist's interpretations of the lyrical salon-like pieces oddly straitlaced and unrelentingly languid. Pessard's sinuous *Andalouse* could be a lot sexier, for example, and Falla's *Jota* is rhythmically square; both lack any feeling of spontaneity. She plays the Vaughan Williams folk-song studies ravishingly – her creamy tone is perfectly even through its range – but it's under-inflected to the point of blandness. In piece after piece here, Dickson seems to be treating folk song as a holy relic, not as a living, breathing thing.

The new works are more satisfying. James MacMillan composed his Saxophone Concerto for Dickson and she plays it flawlessly – an especially impressive feat as it was recorded live. Wisely, perhaps, MacMillan gives the earthy writing to the string orchestra, leaving the saxophone to soar above. Members of the Adelaide Symphony provide solid support, and the audience is invisible until the end. Why Sony opted to include a good 30 seconds of applause and foot-stomping is perplexing, however. The ovation is well deserved, but the concerto is placed smack in the middle of the programme and the cheering spoils the mood.

To my ears, though, the actual star of this album is didgeridoo player and composer William Barton. In Sculthorpe's *Djilile*, Barton provides an entire ensemble's worth of sonorities, some percussive and some that even suggest electronics. And his own *Kalkadunga Yurdu* ('Kalkadoon Man') is the most experimental – and successfully realised – work here. The earthy intensity of his singing is spellbinding (listen starting around 3'45"), and provides an illuminating foil to the cool perfection of Dickson's playing. **Andrew Farach-Colton**

'Mr Handel's Dinner'

Babell Concerto, Op 3 No 1 **Finger** A Ground **Geminiani** Concerto after Corelli, Op 5 No 11 **Handel** Chaconne, HWV435. Concerto (after HWV369 & 293). Passacaille, HWV399. Sonata, HWV362. Suite (from HWV1 & 287). Trio, HWV386a

Maurice Steger *recs*

La Cetra Baroque Orchestra, Basel

Harmonia Mundi (Ⓢ) HMM90 2607 (77' • DDD)



Swiss recorder supremo Maurice Steger's latest offering is a fun-

filled imagining of the sorts of musical interludes that might have accompanied Handel's interval dinners while his operas ruled the roost on London's various stages. *Joie de vivre* verily sings through the air right from the first bars of its fizzing opener: a concerto for alto recorder by Handel himself which began life as a recorder sonata (HWV369), got reworked to become one of the many organ concertos with which he entertained the crowds between acts of his oratorios (HWV293), and appears here in a new amalgamation of those two versions which also sees Steger improvise between the second and third movements, to give a flavour of the extemporaneous insertions with which Handel would enrich his own organ parts. Not that with Steger we have to wait for that cadenza for the flashy stuff: just listen to the breakneck speed with which he dashes off the *Allegro* second movement, where Janine Jonker's equally feistily *en pointe* second recorder line makes for some sizzlingly ear-popping textures.

Indeed, extreme ensemble virtuosity, and the crackest of crack continuo units, are absolute non-negotiables when Steger's around and La Cetra deliver on these throughout in joyous spadefuls. Take the way they're right alongside him for his freewheeling Bourrée – his pirouetting lines now coming via a soprano – sitting within yet another fresh spin on Handel



Ear-popping textures: La Cetra Baroque Orchestra and recorder player Maurice Steger sizzle their way through 'Mr Handel's Dinner'

originals, this time a dance suite assembled out of ballet movements from his 1704 first opera, *Almira, Königin von Castilien*. Or the different brand of ensemble prowess displayed in the opening *Adagio* of Geminiani's G major Flute Concerto (based on Corelli's Op 5 No 11), as the strings' slower, smoother lines snugly dovetail within Steger's own soaring, rhapsodically notey embellishments.

This isn't an album over which the wind is always whistling in your ears, though. For instance, there's Gottfried Finger's ground: always a bewitching number but here especially so with its luscious bass-line continuo richness and its luminous timbres. I'm really not sure what Steger can do to top this album. Although, knowing him, I suspect he might. **Charlotte Gardner**

'Rise'

Bowie Where are we now? **K Bush** This Woman's Work **Dowland** Flow my tears^a **Harle** Briggflatts - Rant! **Iturralde** Pequeña Czarda **Lai** Love Story - Theme **A Marcello** Oboe Concerto - Adagio **Milhaud** Scaramouche - Brazileira **Nyman** The Diary of Anne Frank - If **Shostakovich** Jazz Suite No 2 - Waltz No 2 **Traditional** Dark eyes **Weill** Je ne t'aime pas **Wiedoeft** Valse vanité **J Williams** Escapades - Closing In **Jess Gillam** saxs^a **Miloš Karadaglić** gtr **BBC Concert Orchestra / Richard Balcombe, Jessica Cottis** Decca © 483 4862 (52' • DDD)



Many will remember the 2016 BBC Young Musician of the Year as that rare old tussle between two very different musical personalities – eventual winner Sheku Kanneh-Mason's intensely lyrical cello versus Jess Gillam's colourful, effervescent saxophone. Those core elements have been retained by Kanneh-Mason and Gillam on their respective debut albums – depth and gravitas on the former's 'Inspiration' (3/18), fizz and sparkle on 'Rise'. Yet both albums demonstrate a real willingness to move away from, and question, such simple, crass categorisations.

In Gillam's case, the range of repertoire enables her to explore a wide breadth of moods and atmospheres. Dancelike pieces, such as Pedro Iturralde's *Pequeña Czarda*, the 'Brazileira' from Milhaud's *Scaramouche* and the traditional Russian song 'Dark eyes' contain by-now trademark Gillam-isms – lively characterisation combined with technical brilliance. 'Dark eyes' opens with a cadenza-like flourish which sees Gillam's soprano saxophone darting up and down the instrument's register, the song's original tune eventually transformed into frantic Klezmer-style flourishes.

'Dark eyes' is one of several arrangements by the virtuoso saxophonist John Harle, whose vast experience as composer, arranger and producer is evident throughout. Harle has managed to grasp, harness and develop the multi-dimensional elements that have been innate to Gillam's musical character since the very beginning. More lyrical moments work especially well here, such as in the song arrangements of Michael Nyman's 'If' and Kate Bush's 'This Woman's Work', which allow Gillam more time and space to engage with and shape the sound itself. Harle's own composition, 'Rant!', written for Gillam and drawing on folk materials from Cumberland and Westmorland, is especially powerful. Gillam's soprano saxophone is bright and resonant in its high range, gruff and punchy at the lower end, with Harle's melodic lines and figures at times suggesting Kathryn Tickell's Northumbrian pipe style.

'Rise' is an impressive collection of songs, dances and theme tunes. It perhaps lacks a more substantial sonata-based work that might act as a counterweight to the showpieces: it would be interesting to see what Gillam might make of, say, Michael Torke's Saxophone Concerto or Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Two Memorials*. That, no doubt, is for another time and another album. **Pwyll ap Siôn**

Richard Strauss's Four Last Songs

Lise Davidsen, Gramophone's Young Artist of the Year, discusses the score with James Jolly

When the 84-year-old Richard Strauss laid down his pen on completing a set of four orchestral songs in 1948, he was doing more than resting from a task that had taken him six months. He was both bidding farewell to a particular sound world – soprano voice and orchestra – that he had made uniquely his own, and was also closing a musical chapter, gently ending an era of richly orchestrated, harmonically ripe yet often incandescently transparent music of which he was the last, and greatest, surviving exponent.

Strauss died the following year, never having heard the songs performed, but he did have a particular soprano in mind for the premiere. 'I would like to make it possible,' he'd written to Kirsten Flagstad, 'that [the songs] should be at your disposal for a world premiere in the course of a concert with a first-class conductor and orchestra.' The first-class orchestra would be the Philharmonia and the conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler who, along with Herbert von Karajan, had trained this young London ensemble to a level of arguably the world's finest orchestra at the time. The premiere took place in London's Royal Albert Hall on May 22, 1950, and Flagstad was indeed the soloist.

Sixty-nine years later, another Norwegian soprano joined the Philharmonia Orchestra under Esa-Pekka Salonen to record what had become the *Four Last Songs* (a wonderfully fitting title bestowed on them by Strauss's publisher at Boosey & Hawkes, Ernst Roth). Lise Davidsen is very quick to quash any parallels. 'I've always felt very uncomfortable when people try to make connections between me and Flagstad, and yet there we were – me, a Norwegian soprano – recording them in London with the Philharmonia!' There is, though, one major difference between the premiere and the recording – something that leaps off the contents page of the score as we open our copies. 'We did very, very briefly consider following the original order,' Davidsen revealed, 'but the published order makes so much more sense.'

When Flagstad first sang them, the order was 'Beim Schlafengehen', 'September', 'Frühling' and 'Im Abendrot', but Roth published them in the now customary 'Frühling', 'September', 'Beim Schlafengehen' and 'Im Abendrot'. The first three songs set poems by Hermann Hesse, a poet that Strauss had only recently discovered, and the group ends with words by that great poet of the Romantic era, Joseph von Eichendorff. The *Four Last Songs* are not a cycle, but they are linked by a very strong emotional and perhaps spiritual thread: that of the end of a journey, a welcome resignation and willingness to embrace death. The journey runs from spring to autumn, yet as the elderly couple, who have travelled so long together, ask 'Is this perhaps death?', the music surely celebrates the continuation of life as a pair of piccolos/birds trills ever higher into the sky.

Lise Davidsen has lived a long time with these songs even though she has only started singing them with orchestra in the past couple of years. 'I've worked on them ever since I was at the conservatory. I didn't do them in concert, but I used them



Lise Davidsen recording her album with the Philharmonia and Esa-Pekka Salonen

as practice because, at first, I couldn't relate the text and the music. The music is often very beautiful, but you have to find a way of taking it down a notch. Like reading poetry, it takes time to get to the heart of it.'

The *Four Last Songs* often 'liquefy' the poetry in long melismatic phrases, stretching a single word over many notes, to the extent that the music almost shrugs off the words' precise meaning. 'I do completely follow you, yet I think the music is so well written that in a way you feel what they're about even if you aren't grasping every single word. And I think that's why I used these songs for study because that relationship between word and music is so extraordinary. They are so hard to do but it's important to keep doing them.'

'Frühling' has the biggest range of the four (from a middle C to B above the staff). When a lyric soprano – the 'default' voice-type these days for the work – sings them, the opening phrase, which takes in the low C, can sound awkward. 'That C isn't unusual for my voice', Davidsen counters, 'but it's the swap between registers, at "und blauen Lüften", that's harder. These first two pages are the ones where I have the most marks in my score because they present the biggest challenge between making it too light or, on the other hand, sounding like a truck charging down on you!'

Those two pages, which actually only cover the song's first stanza, seem to encapsulate the stylistic world of the entire work, with the soprano soaring over the orchestra. 'I love the way it's written but it has its challenges!' And what about breathing? 'I do it exactly as written but in "Beim Schlafengehen" I follow the option that many singers take, after the violin solo, of repeating the word "Tausend". Who could do that in a single breath anyway? Some words are stretched over so many bars that if you repeat the word, it's not ruining the sense.' (A quick sample finds Schwarzkopf,

Isokoski and Te Kanawa all popping in an extra ‘Tausend’ – and a breath – while Janowitz does it all on a single word, though she too, also being human, grabs a breath mid-word.)


‘I feel “September” is more like a still picture’, Davidsen continues, ‘whereas “Frühling” is perhaps like a short film. It’s taken from one position, within the same frame, yet it’s so alive. You know exactly what’s happening. In terms of how it’s written, and I remember discussing this with Ed Gardner when we did them in Bergen, it’s quite low – and the orchestra too is low and quite thick – and there are moments when I’d like to go super-soft but can’t because of what’s going on around me. I’d be drowned! In a recording of course it *is* possible because the microphone is just in front of you. This is one of the few places I have to think quite hard about being able to be heard, and that’s not the case elsewhere in these songs.

‘I’ve always loved “September”, right from the beginning, perhaps because the text is a little more concrete. You know the rose is stronger than other flowers in the garden, but you know it won’t survive the autumn either. Certain flowers will hang on, but they can never go on forever, and neither can the poet.’

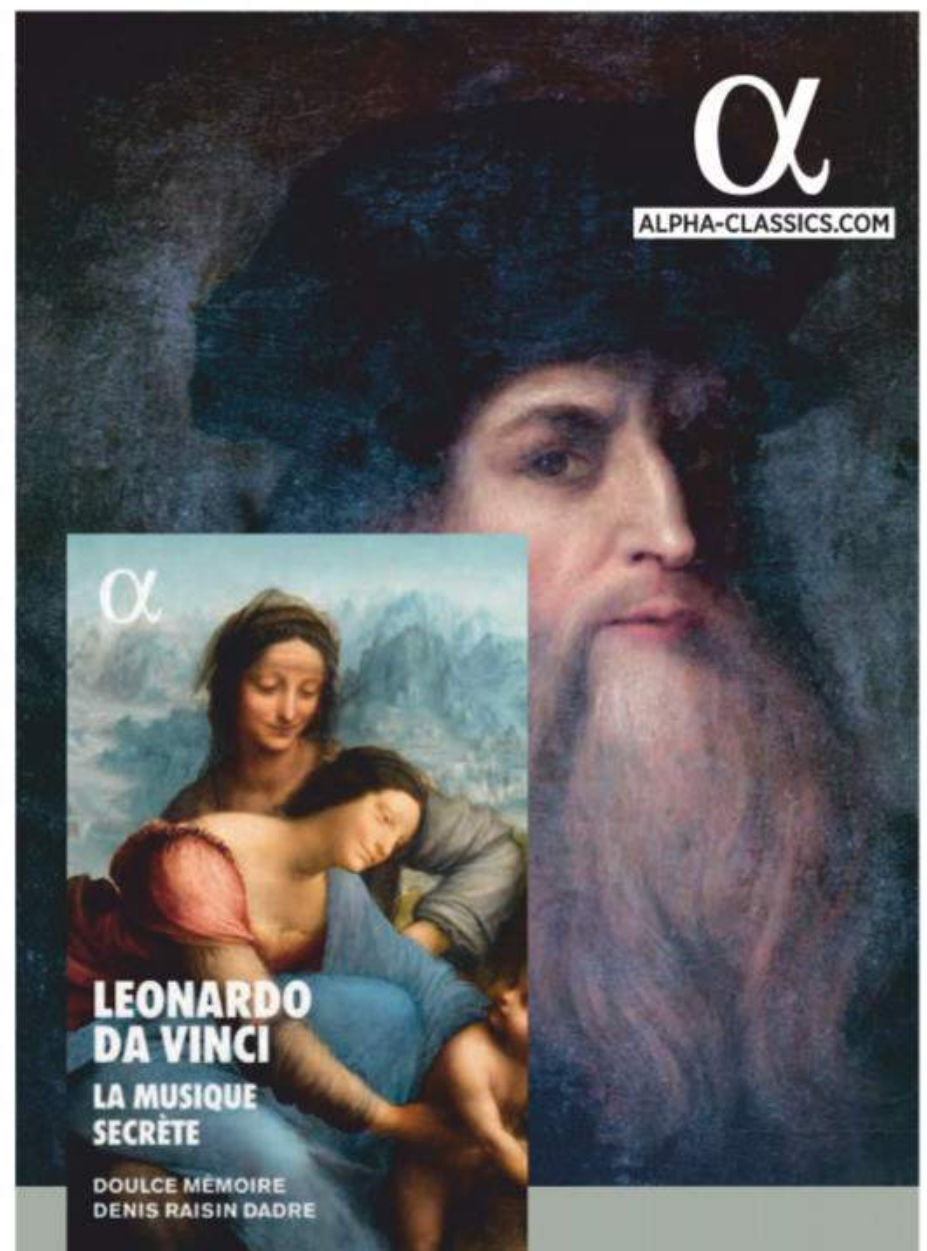
‘I feel “September” is more like a still picture, whereas “Frühling” is perhaps like a short film’

The orchestration of ‘Beim Schlafengehen’ is thicker and climbs up from far below. And both this and the last song have very long passages without the voice. In his edition of Berlioz’s book on orchestration, Strauss makes the point that the solo violin should be used very sparingly. ‘And, of course, when he does,’ Davidsen is quick to add, ‘he writes some really good solos. Think of “Morgen!” and this one ... I remember when we got to the solo in the recording session, it was so soft, so pure, that I almost didn’t sing! It’s one of those moments where you can sense the audience becoming totally involved. There’s an intimacy about these songs that appeals so much to people and when the singer emerges from the solo it’s just extraordinary. It’s a real high point.’

‘Im Abendrot’ opens with a huge wall of sound with so many divided parts. ‘Sometimes I have to think about something else’, Davidsen admits, ‘because it’s so overwhelming and I don’t want to mess up my entry. It has a very different mood. It’s got a narrative – you can tell what’s happening but the experience I think should be very personal for each listener. The person you’re with in this final song is for *you* to decide. You have your person you walk with, hand in hand, and I have mine. Finding the balance between imposing *my* angle on it and upsetting *yours* is very delicate.’

The end is quite unusual for the length of the postlude, and presents the singer with a different challenge ... ‘I stand and just listen’, Davidsen confesses, ‘because I have a vivid movie going in my mind at this point. It’s a little like a repeat of the entire song and because of that it doesn’t feel so long. The end just settles bit by bit and so you feel the close is entirely natural. I remember after one of the performances I did in Bergen, the audience was so completely with us that at the end there was silence for such a long time. It was as if they were breathing with us. And that was quite unusual because they usually dive in with their applause very quickly. It was really wonderful!’ 

► Hugo Shirley reviews Lise Davidsen’s Decca recording on page 87



1 CD+BOOK ALPHA 456

For the 500th anniversary of the death of Leonardo da Vinci in 1519, the ensemble Douce Mémoire celebrates this great genius of humanity – scientist, inventor, painter... and musician. ‘I have been working on what might be the secret, hidden music of his paintings, what pieces of music his pictures might suggest...’ says Denis Raisin Dadre, who has matched 10 of da Vinci’s masterworks with music by 15th- and 16th-century composers... A luxurious booklet accompanies this newly-released recording, with details that give a fresh insight into the paintings.

LEONARDO DA VINCI

THE HIDDEN MUSIC

DOULCE MÉMOIRE
DENIS RAISIN DADRE



Chamber



Harriet Smith listens to the Albion Quartet playing Dvořák and Suk:

'The players make a strong case for this youthful piece, powerfully refuting the notion that it took Dvořák time to hit his stride' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 60**



David Threasher enjoys lively period-instrument Schubert:

'Modern instruments have developed to be better-behaved but these players exult in the timbral differences' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 61**

Antheil

'Complete Violin Music, Vol 1'

Violin Sonatas – No 1; No 2; No 3; No 4

Alessandro Fagiuoli *vn* **Alessia Toffanin** *pf*

AVI-Music © AVI8553934 (79' • DDD)



Antheil composed his first three violin sonatas in 1923–24, while he was living

and working in Europe. They are cut from similar cloth, with striking use of repetition and stark juxtaposition, yet each has its own distinct personality. Stravinsky's influence is readily apparent in all three – the borrowings from *The Soldier's Tale* and *The Rite of Spring* in the opening movement of the First are unmistakable.

Antheil tosses quotations of popular songs into the relatively concise Second Sonata, which ends very touchingly with the pianist abandoning the keyboard for drums for what sounds to me like a melancholy medieval dance. The Third, cast in a single massive movement, picks up where the lyrical conclusion of its predecessor left off.

A 24-year gap separates the Third and Fourth Sonatas, and there's an equally sizeable stylistic shift. Antheil composed the latter in 1948 while living in Hollywood. Like the contemporaneous Fifth Symphony, it shows Antheil in thrall to Prokofiev and Shostakovich.

There have been two excellent, though incomplete, surveys of Antheil's violin sonatas on disc (both bypass the Third). Vera Beths and Reinbert de Leeuw (Disques Montaigne) capture the music's spiky *joie de vivre* while projecting a long line that seems to try to connect Antheil to his European forebears. Mark Fewer and John Novacek (Azica) are freer in tempo and more theatrical, treating the works almost as a kind of performance art. Alessandro Fagiuoli and Alessia Toffanin give us all four sonatas – this is, in fact, the recorded premiere of the Third – but their performances are far too stodgy and stiff to

be recommended. Toffanin's playing is notable for its sculptural clarity and Fagiuoli does well enough in lyrical passages, but these works require a lot more rhythmic drive and general exuberance than we're given here.

Andrew Farach-Colton

Arensky • Rachmaninov • Zemlinsky

Arensky Piano Trio No 1, Op 32 **Rachmaninov**

Trio élégiaque No 1 **Zemlinsky** Piano Trio, Op 3

Smetana Trio

Supraphon © SU4258-2 (74' • DDD)



The Smetana Trio is one of those groups in the grand Czech tradition; this latest

line-up features three formidably fine musicians, including cellist Jan Páleníček, whose pianist father Josef co-founded the group in 1934. It's good to have an unorthodox programme and they bring to all three pieces a warmth and strong sense of communicativeness.

Zemlinsky was in his mid-twenties when he wrote his D minor Trio, initially conceived as a trio for clarinet, cello and piano and composed for a competition (in which he came third). He then reworked it for the present line-up, which is more effective still, the violin able to stand out from the texture in a way the clarinet cannot. It's full of good things – the slow movement in the Smetana's reading is allowed to dream but never sounds indulgent (I find the Beaux Arts a little slow here), and the violin and cello lines entwine with great affection. The finale's combination of skittishness and expressive writing is well done, too, and the pianist ensures that the sometimes richly Brahmsian textures never overwhelm the balance.

Rachmaninov was just 19 when he wrote his first *Trio élégiaque*. The Smetana are alive to the piece's mix of tenderness and passion, and they produce some thrillingly hushed playing. Kremer's recent recording

with Giedrė Dirvanauskaitė and Daniil Trifonov is a little more driven, with climaxes perhaps more overtly exciting, but the sensitivity with which the players interact on the new recording is very winning. Just sample the cellist's rendition of the aching melody (track 4, from 9'09"), which is given due time to breathe, compared to which Kremer's group sound somewhat edgier.

Arensky's First Trio was written two years after the Rachmaninov and, like much of his music, it deserves to be better known. The Smetana make a very strong case for it, with the string players constantly varying the colouring of the Schumannesque main theme of the first movement. The Wanderer are a degree more Classical in their approach but I like the wholeheartedness of this new set. The Scherzo has a tremendous sense of play and energy to it, the Smetana enjoying Arensky's imaginative string textures, whereas the Wanderer opt for a more highly polished finish; I particularly like the warmth the Czech players bring to its Trio. The Smetana's slower tempo for the *Adagio* plays up its elegiac quality, giving it a sombre beauty that is very telling. The finale has a real drama and drive, the Smetana making much of the contrast between jagged energy and the more lyrical moments. The reintroduction near the close of the theme that opened the work makes for a touching farewell, and is particularly potently realised by the Smetana Trio. **Harriet Smith**

Zemlinsky – selected comparison:

Beaux Arts Trio (6/94) (PHIL) 434 072-2PH

Rachmaninov – selected comparison:

Kremer, Dirvanauskaitė, Trifonov

(5/17) (DG) 479 6979GH

Arensky – selected comparison:

Trio Wanderer (2/14) (HARM) HMC90 2161

JS Bach

Sonatas for Violin and Keyboard –

No 3, BWV1016; No 4, BWV1017;

No 5, BWV1018; No 6, BWV1019

Renaud Capuçon *vn* **David Fray** *pf*

Erato © 9029 55057-8 (64' • DDD)



Leonard Elschenbroich and Alexei Grynyuk highlight the drama in Beethoven's cello sonatas



A decade on from *Swing, Sing & Think* – Bruno Monsaingeon's

film that follows David Fray recording Bach's keyboard concertos, in which the French pianist asks the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen for 'something more ... [chuckles] ... sensual' (to their ambivalence, indeed dismissiveness) – I am glad that Fray is still swinging, singing and thinking. Indeed, I am elated he is still recording Bach. Fray is the star of this album. Duo partner Renaud Capuçon's sound is velvety, sometimes tender. But, on the whole, it is overly charged with electricity: a default setting of extremely intense vibrato that is unsympathetic to phrasing and the piano's temperament. This is particularly problematic in quick movements. Vibrato with doorbell shrillness, as in the *Vivace* from BWV1018, for example, worsens Capuçon's already dubious intonation – something that considerably suffers in the first *Allegro* of BWV1016. This is all so frustrating when in the next movement,

an *Adagio ma non tanto*, Fray and Capuçon turn a corner and deliver something stunning: haunting and heartfelt in beauty. This is Bach played as if the pair have only moments left to live; finite strength to say I love you, to breathe in your hair. It makes for glorious listening.

Fray's commitment to articulating Bach's mercurial patterns, surprising harmonic language and long phrases is wondrous. The specificity of each artistic decision, each placing, is delivered with honesty and intelligence. It is as if each of Fray's fingertips has a tiny brain and pair of lungs of its own. The opening movement of the Sonata in G, BWV1019, gleams in *moto perpetuo* joy. The solo keyboard *Allegro* movement is capricious in light and shade. This is everything I hoped the sensual twenty-something of *Swing, Sing & Think* would grow into. What then is most sad is what Fray and Capuçon chose to exclude. Where is the *Cantabile, ma un poco adagio* from an earlier version of BWV1019 from Bach's time in Cöthen? Patient waiting for a hidden track goes unrewarded here. Its absence, however, does mean one good thing: there is more Bach out there for Fray to record, and I can't wait to get my hands on it. **Mark Seow**

Beethoven

Five Cello Sonatas. Cello (Horn) Sonata, Op 17

Leonard Elschenbroich *vc* Alexei Grynyuk *pf*

Onyx (M) ② ONYX4196 (126' • DDD)



There's little in Beethoven's output that's undervalued but I have the

sense that the cello sonatas don't quite get the respect they deserve. The pair of Op 5 show the young composer flexing his creative muscles in vast sonata structures that teem with ideas and incident; Op 69 is a veritable melodic feast; and Op 102's two are wondrously weird.

In Leonard Elschenbroich and Alexei Grynyuk's hands, these sonatas' staggering invention is impossible to ignore. The musicians' success comes, at least in part, from scrupulous attention to the composer's markings in matters of dynamics and articulation. Listen to the expectant hush with which they play the beginning of Op 5 No 1 – and note, too, how Elschenbroich sneaks into a crescendo so it seems to come out of

nowhere. Or turn to the opening *Andante* of Op 102 No 1, rendered with such rapt yearning that it sounds as if it's being dreamily improvised.

Dynamic contrasts are starkly defined throughout, further sharpening musical characterisations. They wring every last ounce of drama from the central *Allegro molto* of Op 5 No 2, for example, and although they play both repeats, there's no slackening of tension or feeling of protraction. I was particularly riveted by the cellist's fervid phrasing in the repeat of the development section (at 9'05"), where he digs in even deeper than the first time around. His sound isn't especially plummy – there's a slight (and, I think, endearing) nasal quality to it – but his legato is seamless and he's not shy about roughing up his tone when called for, as in the two Trios of Op 69's Scherzo.

Indeed, Elschenbroich and Grynyuk find a wealth of textural variety in these sonatas. Grynyuk's touch can be astonishingly delicate and is unfailingly articulate. I love the rhythmic buoyancy both musicians bring to the rondos of Op 5 No 2 and Op 69 – whose ebullience borders on the giddy – and by Op 102 No 2's concluding *Allegro* fugato, where they step lightly and with unfailing grace through exceptionally intricate polyphony.

They can drive the music hard in fast movements, although their playing always breathes naturally. In a few places, I feel the breaths between thematic sections are held a hair too long. And in the slender slow introduction to Op 69's finale their phrasing feels a bit fussy when heard alongside, say, Rostropovich and Richter (Philips, 4/95).

Unlike many other recordings of the complete sonatas, Elschenbroich and Grynyuk eschew the sets of variations, offering instead a delightful account of the Horn Sonata in an arrangement likely made by the composer himself. The balance between the instruments ever so slightly favours the piano, and in some *forte* passages I wish the cello had greater presence. But this is a very minor complaint in the face of such superb music-making.

Andrew Farach-Colton

Borodin · Shostakovich · Weinberg

Borodin String Quartet No 2

Shostakovich String Quartet No 8, Op 110

Weinberg String Quartet No 5, Op 27

Dragon Quartet

Channel Classics © CCS40919 (73' • DDD)



The young Chinese musicians of the Dragon Quartet here follow up

their first disc for Channel Classics (of Schubert and Dvořák) with a programme of Russian quartets that confirms their right to be considered alongside the best of their Western counterparts.

They set out their stall with Borodin's Second, which is as euphonious and expressive as you could wish – devoid of mannerism but by no means lacking in communicative intensity. Then Shostakovich's Eighth – over-familiar to many but seemingly not to them – is finely paced and expressively well focused. Especially welcome is the minimum of extraneous noise and maximum of clarity in the fast second movement (surprising how many ensembles overdo the violence here); and the fourth movement's confessional solos show how closely they identify with the personal suffering at the heart of the work, without ever tipping it into maudlin exaggeration.

It's good to see Weinberg's quartets being taken up by other ensembles, though they all face the challenge of comparison with the Quatuor Danel's fervent pioneering accounts (CPO, 4/08, 2/09, 2/12, A/12). The Fifth Quartet comes from the period of Weinberg's extraordinary chamber music efflorescence in the first years after his settling in Moscow. Much of it would be familiar to listeners from his reworking of extensive parts of it much later in life as his Third Chamber Symphony.

The melodic lines in the first movement are beautifully shaped, though not with the personal touches that make the Danels' playing so special. Perhaps the Dragons also miss some opportunities for quizzical humour in the outer sections of the Humoresque second movement. They match the Danels for helter-skelter energy in the Scherzo, though not with quite the same quality of dangerous intensity. Best of all, perhaps, is the way the Dragons manage the difficult transitions to and away from the Serenade finale's *Allegro furioso* high point.

Close but not oppressive recorded balance enhances the attractions of the disc, which, to say the least, makes an impressive calling card. **David Fanning**

Brahms · Mahler · Mozart

Brahms Piano Quartet No 1, Op 25

Mahler Piano Quartet Movement

Mozart Piano Quartet No 1, K478

Skride Piano Quartet

Orfeo © C946 191 (71' • DDD)



'You English make Brahms so cold! In reality he was such a human person',

said his former pupil Ilona Eibenschütz. There's not the slightest question of coldness in this account of his G minor Piano Quartet, and why should there be? It's the work of a composer in his twenties, and it's to the credit of this multinational chamber supergroup – the Latvian sisters Baiba and Laume Skride, plus Lise Berthaud on viola and Harriet Krijgh on cello – that you never forget this. The sense of tension – of momentum – that's audible in the very first bars carries right through to the finish of Brahms's gypsy finale.

If, at times, it can all feel a little breathless, I'd argue that the gains outweigh any losses: notably a slow movement that simply pours out in a glowing stream, flecked with touches of fantasy (portamentos from Baiba on violin, glinting flourishes from Lauma on piano). The group handle Brahms's livelier secondary material with a sparkle in the eye and an almost military swagger. And of course the finale is exactly as fiery as you'd hope: the rhythms kick, you can hear the bite of rosin on string and Lauma does a very persuasive impression of a cimbalom in her whirling mini-cadenza.

Mozart's G minor Piano Quartet opens the disc, and this too is taut, energetic and unaffected, though the string players – perhaps hoping for increased clarity – ease off on the vibrato, with results that can feel slightly chilly. But then they launch themselves headlong at the Mahler, and with Lauma handling the wonderfully splashy piano part like Liszt in a fever-dream, it couldn't feel more right. So sit back, we're on the road to Brahmsian glory.

Richard Bratby

F Couperin

Concerts royaux

Les Talens Lyriques / Christophe Rousset *hpd*

Aparté © AP196 (61' • DDD)

F Couperin

Les nations

Les Talens Lyriques / Christophe Rousset *hpd*

Aparté © (two discs for the price of one) AP197 (109' • DDD)



Chamber supergroup: the Skride Piano Quartet bring a human warmth to Brahms, Mozart and Mahler



Christophe Rousset and Les Talens Lyriques celebrate the 350th anniversary of the birth of François Couperin 'le Grand' (1668-1733) with two of the composer's collections of chamber pieces. The *Concerts royaux* were published as a supplement to his third book of harpsichord pieces (1722); Couperin explained that they had been composed in 1714-15 and played at the royal court during Sunday concerts for Louis XIV. Violinist Stéphanie-Marie Degand, flautist Georges Barthel and oboist Patrick Beaugiraud occasionally play together in unison (the gorgeous *Échos* that concludes the *Second Concert*) and from time to time they mix colours when Couperin calls for a trio sonata texture, but for the most part the three treble instruments take solo turns. Beaugiraud's entrancing soulfulness, Barthel's sweet intimacy and Degand's sophisticated phrasing all cultivate the emotionally touching qualities of Couperin's artistry (the violin and flute whisper seductively to each other in the

Sarabande from the *Quatrième Concert*). Continuo support from Rousset and gambist Atsushi Sakaï mines a rich seam of sonorities, from delicate pastoral charm (the *Musette* of the *Troisième Concert*) to the convivial finesse of lively dances (the *Rigaudon* and *Forlane* that conclude the set).

Les nations (1726) consists of four 'ordres' written over a period of about 30 years. Although their titles claim to represent 'La Française', 'La Piémontaise', 'L'Espagnole' and 'L'Impériale' (the Holy Roman Empire), each commences with an Italianate trio sonata followed by an assortment of dances oscillating between Italian and French styles. The original part-books do not stipulate the instrumentation of the first and second 'dessus' (treble) lines. It is possible for *Les nations* to be performed simply as Corellian trio sonatas by two violins and continuo, as proved by the Purcell Quartet, but most interpreters mix and match a bigger range of instruments to their heart's content – such as Jordi Savall's all-star ensemble (freshly reissued and well worth revisiting) and this eloquent account by Les Talens Lyriques.

There is effortlessly flowing momentum throughout these performances – such as the irresistibly lovely chaconne in

'L'Impériale' and the closing gigue of 'La Piémontaise', each played with gently lilting *inégaies* and gracefulness. A pair of flutes (Jocelyn Daubigney and Stefanie Troffaes) murmur soft incantations over tenderly shaped continuo accompaniments in the sarabande of 'La Française'. A quartet of two violins (Gilone Gaubert-Jacques and Gabriel Grosbard), bass viol (Sakaï) and theorbo (Laura Mónica Pustilnik) create unfolding cascades of sensuousness in the sarabande in 'L'Espagnole'. The woodwind trio of oboes (Josep Domenech and Thomas Meraner) and bassoon (Eyal Streett) play with jocular spontaneity in the buoyant second courante in 'La Piémontaise'. Rousset's spot-on harpsichord realisations, pacing and shaping of small details are never at the expense of the broader picture. A captivating breadth of characters, moods and sonorities are captured in the ideal acoustic of the Galerie Dorée, a ceremonial hall in the headquarters of the Banque de France, formerly the residence of the Comte de Toulouse (an illegitimate son of Louis XIV), for whom Couperin is known to have played. **David Vickers**

Les nations – selected comparisons:

Hespèrion XX, Savall (8/86⁸) (ALLA) AVSA9928

Purcell Qt (5/03, 1/07) (CHAN) CHAN0684, CHAN0729

Dvořák • Suk

Dvořák String Quartets – No 5, Op 9 B37; No 12, 'American', Op 96 B179 **Suk** Meditation on an Old Czech Hymn, 'St Wenceslas', Op 35a **Albion Quartet**
 Signum © SIGCD555 (64' • DDD)



The Albion Quartet, formed as recently as 2016, are a group of young Brits led by Tamsin Waley-Cohen. In a crowded field of youthful quartets, it says much that the Albion have already appeared at illustrious venues such as the Concertgebouw and Wigmore Hall. But it's also in the nature of quartets that they can take time to settle, and Rosalind Ventris – characterful viola player and note-writer on this recording – is alas no longer part of the line-up.

This is to be the start of a Dvořák cycle and they begin with the Fifth, Op 9, written in 1873 (don't be misled by that fact that it's listed wrongly on the CD as 'F major, Op 92' rather than F minor, Op 9). The players make a strong case for this youthful piece, powerfully refuting the notion that it took time for Dvořák to hit his stride in the quartets and symphonies. They have a very airy quality to their sound (how I'd like to hear them in Mendelssohn), while their attention to the smallest detail reaps dividends, making the first movement sound not a whit too long. There's a murmuring intimacy to their playing in the second, compared to which the Vlach Quartet Prague are a little more luxuriant in depth of sound and slightly more spacious in tempo. The brief *Tempo di valse* has a nervousness, with the first violin colouring her line with subtle portamentos, while the finale is high on energy but just occasionally could have done with more weight in the *tutti*s.

The Albion's approach to the *American*, from 20 years later, is similar, with a fastidiousness to ensemble and texture. Yet here I find myself less convinced: there's an essential warmth and ease that is found in the greatest interpretations – often by Czech quartets – which the Albion can't quite match. At the start of the *Lento*, for instance, the first violin takes centre stage, with the remaining three players mere shadowy presences, whereas in the accounts by the Pavel Haas Quartet and the Škampa there's more sense of give and take. I could have done with more blatant rusticity to the Scherzo, too, which is a bit too spick and span for my tastes. The Albion pace themselves well in the finale but again

they're less characterful than the Škampa, in particular, and the closing moments don't quite find enough sense of unfettered exuberance. They end with Suk's beautiful *Meditation on 'St Wenceslas'*, which they deliver with great poise. **Harriet Smith**

'American' Quartet – selected comparisons:

Pavel Haas Qt (12/10) (SUPR) SU4038-2

Škampa Qt (8/17) (CHAM) CHRCD110

Quartet No 5 – selected comparison:

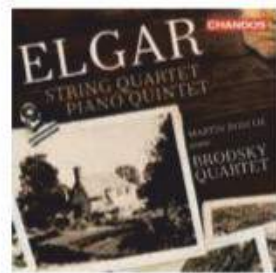
Vlach Qt (11/99) (NAXO) 8 553377

Elgar

String Quartet, Op 83. Piano Quintet, Op 84^a

^a**Martin Roscoe** *pf* **Brodsky Quartet**

Chandos © CHAN10980 (67' • DDD)



Performances of conspicuous insight, pedigree and power. In the mighty Piano

Quintet the Brodskys generate a consistently stimulating rapport with the admirable Martin Roscoe. Theirs is a marvellously cogent conception, ideally paced and splendidly integrated, possessing a dedication, sweep and ardour that betoken a very real identification with this repertoire. If you need convincing, try from the start of the first-movement development at fig 10 or 5'46", where the stormy dialogue attains an unstoppable momentum that thrillingly carries over into the recapitulation. At the same time, these articulate newcomers are arrestingly appreciative of the spookier elements (the strings' *mf* accents at the work's outset will make you sit up, that *f* chord a little later at six bars before fig 6 or 3'01" even more so), not to mention the piercing heartache and awestruck wonder that course through the ensuing *Adagio* centrepiece. Memorably touching, too, are those wistful reminiscences of earlier material at the heart of the finale.

A most distinguished display, then, and it's preceded here by a keenly perceptive, shrewdly observant account of the String Quartet. Take the slow movement, where Elgar's marking of *Piacevole* ('pleasantly') is played down in favour of something infinitely more sorrowful. Likewise, how persuasively the Brodskys gauge the ambivalent mood that pervades both outer movements. Above all, this is a profoundly thoughtful reading that makes one appreciate anew Elgar's absolute command of the medium, while at the same time revelling in the music's sinewy strength and often surprisingly bony textures.

The Potton Hall sound has realism, bloom and impact to spare, and there are

excellent notes by Conor Farrington and the Brodsky Quartet's cellist, Jacqueline Thomas. Even if you already own the outstanding Hyperion coupling of these masterworks featuring the Goldner String Quartet with Piers Lane (10/11), it's worth acquiring this rewarding issue.

Andrew Achenbach

Gnattali • Villa-Lobos

'Flor da noite'

Gnattali Violin Sonata^a. Canhoto. Flor da noite^a.

Maneirando. Negaceando. Perfumosa. Poema^a.

Pretenciosa. Uma rosa para o Pixinguinha^a.

Suite Antiga – Aria^a. Violino^a **Villa-Lobos** O canto do cisne negro^a. Improviso No 7^a

^a**Floor Braam** *vn* **Luís Rabello** *pf*

Challenge Classics © CC72805 (49' • DDD)



Radamés Gnattali (1906–88) was an important figure in Brazilian music. He

never realised his dream of being a concert pianist, and instead spent most of his career writing and arranging for the orchestra of Brazil's Rádio Nacional. He played guitar and violin, too, and is probably best known for his guitar music (I first encountered his music on old Capitol LPs by Laurindo Almeida).

Here we have Gnattali's works for violin and piano along with some solo piano music. The booklet note provides basic biographical information but nothing on the individual pieces, aside from the back story to the disc's title-work. We're told that *Flor da noite* ('Flower of Night') was inspired by a beautiful woman who sang as she sold popcorn outside a theatre. It's sensual, rhapsodic, harmonically sophisticated music that draws stylistically from both jazz and Ravel (I'll bet Bill Evans would have loved it). The *Poema* is in a similar style, although more discursive and structurally expansive, while the Aria from *Suite antiga* reminds me of Piazzolla (the two men were near contemporaries) with its pristine classical texture and melancholy mood.

This is a programme of miniatures. The *Poema*, at nearly eight minutes, is the longest, and even the three-movement Violin Sonata is rather slender, just 10 minutes in all. The sonata is a most attractive work, however. I'm particularly charmed by the central Cantilena, with its aching harmonies and obsessively insistent piano accompaniment, while the final *Alegre* serves as a delightful foil, its childlike melodies developed with Haydnesque lucidity and wit.

The Dutch violinist Floor Braam's playing is sweet yet unaffected. Her tone can take on an edge high above the stave but is generally pleasing. Pianist Luís Rabello is a sensitive partner and does a terrific job in the solo pieces, many of which are quite intricate and have the quality of jazz improvisations.

Gnattali's music deserves wider notice, and there's room for more of it on this disc, even with the inclusion of the two brief Villa-Lobos piece as encores. The *Improviso* No 7 reveals Gnattali's debt to his older colleague, although minus the jazz element. But the highlight of the entire programme may be Villa-Lobos's haunting *Song of the Black Swan* (better known in its version for cello), with its long-limbed, dark melody floating over a smoothly rippling accompaniment. Braam and Rabello play it exquisitely. **Andrew Farach-Colton**

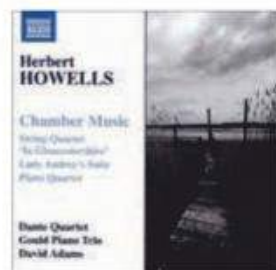
Howells

Lady Audrey's Suite, Op 19^a. Piano Quartet, Op 21^b. String Quartet No 3, 'In Gloucestershire'^a

^aDante Quartet; ^bGould Piano Trio with

^bDavid Adams *va*

Naxos © 8 573913 (76' • DDD)



Here's a disc to sweep away preconceptions and to help you hear with fresh ears.

Howells described the finale of his Piano Quartet – dedicated, unforgettably, to 'the Hill at Chosen and Ivor Gurney who knows it' – as 'the Hill in the month of March, with splendid winds of Spring rioting over it', and I felt very much that way about this whole recital. This disc contains music-making of such energy, clear-sightedness and passion that sceptics may wonder where Howells has been all their lives; enthusiasts, of course, will feel wholly vindicated.

There's even a premiere recording: Howells's 1915-vintage *Lady Audrey's Suite*, four character pieces dedicated to a friend's child that crib their titles from Debussy and their colours from Ravel – the pizzicato accompaniment of the opening movement is almost a direct quote from his String Quartet. Like everything here, it's a useful corrective to the prejudice that Howells's pastoral manner was somehow parochial or backward-looking, and the Dante Quartet characterise the four movements with bright-eyed clarity and affection.

The same approach makes their account of *In Gloucestershire* one of the most vivid on record: letting Howells's long, singing melodies fall as they come, but surrounding

them with fantasy and colour – tremolandos that buzz with electricity, featherlight filigree textures and surging, windswept climaxes. And from Benjamin Frith's dark, purposeful opening notes, the Piano Quartet has the same combination of ecstasy, atmosphere and grandiloquence. It sweeps along: you'll taste Ravel on the breeze, and the Vaughan Williams of *On Wenlock Edge*, and if like me you've never really clicked with Howells's choral music, you'll come away tingling with the thrill of discovering an unarguable masterpiece. Hats off to all concerned. **Richard Bratby**

Reich

'Live at Fondation Louis Vuitton'

Clapping Music^a. Mallet Quartet^b. Music for Pieces of Wood^b. Proverb^c. Pulse^b

Colin Currie *percussion*/^aclapping ^aSteve Reich *clapping* ^cSynergy Vocals; ^{bc}Colin Currie Group

Colin Currie Records © CCR0003 (64' • DDD)

Recorded live, December 2-3, 2017



With performances by Steve Reich and Musicians – Reich's own group – becoming

a far less regular occurrence these days, it has been left largely to others to record and perform his music. The list now includes several important ensembles, ranging from Paul Hillier and Theatre of Voices, Alan Pierson and Alarm Will Sound, Brad Lubman and Signal Ensemble, Ictus Ensemble, Third Coast Percussion and Powerplant to soloists such as Kuniko Kato.

Among the most important to make their mark on Reich's music is the Colin Currie Group. The virtuoso percussionist's ensemble team up again with Synergy Vocals for this recording, which captures two performances given in the opulent surroundings of Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, in December 2017.

As is often the case these days when the composer himself is present, Currie and Reich kick off with a punchy performance of *Clapping Music*. A strong rhythmic focus is maintained for *Music for Pieces of Wood* and the more recent *Mallet Quartet*, where two marimbas provide a rock-steady rhythmic pedal against which two vibraphones overlay a series of complex interlocking patterns. A powerful rhythmic incisiveness and assertiveness that marked the group's excellent recording of *Drumming* (5/18) is again apparent throughout.

The two remaining compositions present Reich's music in a more reflective light.

The opening of the most recent work featured here, *Pulse*, is taken at a steadier pace than on the recent recording by the International Contemporary Ensemble (Nonesuch, 4/18). This enables Currie, now directing, to impart a slightly more dramatic curve to the work's gently undulating trajectory.

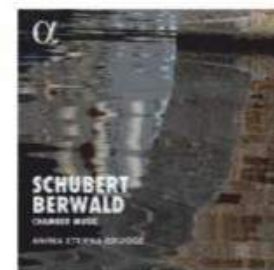
Composed in 1995, the aphoristic *Proverb* sees Reich pay homage to Pérotin via an epigram from the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein ('How small a thought it takes to build a whole life!'). Live performances of *Proverb* have been quite rare, partly because of its unusual instrumentation (a combination of three female and two male voices, two MIDI electric organs and two vibraphones), but also because of the technical demands it places on the singers, who have to navigate a quite treacherous tonal tightrope. The original recording, featuring Paul Hillier and Theatre of Voices, was probably pieced together from a patchwork of edits. Other than a little wobble in the middle section, where the music suddenly shifts downwards semitonally from B minor to a kind of E flat minor over a pedal B flat, Synergy Vocals impart a beautiful, haunting performance, whose quiescence quietly defuses the energy and explosiveness of the rhythmic pieces. **Pwyll ap Siôn**

Schubert · Berwald

Berwald Grand Septet Schubert Octet, D803

Anima Eterna Brugge

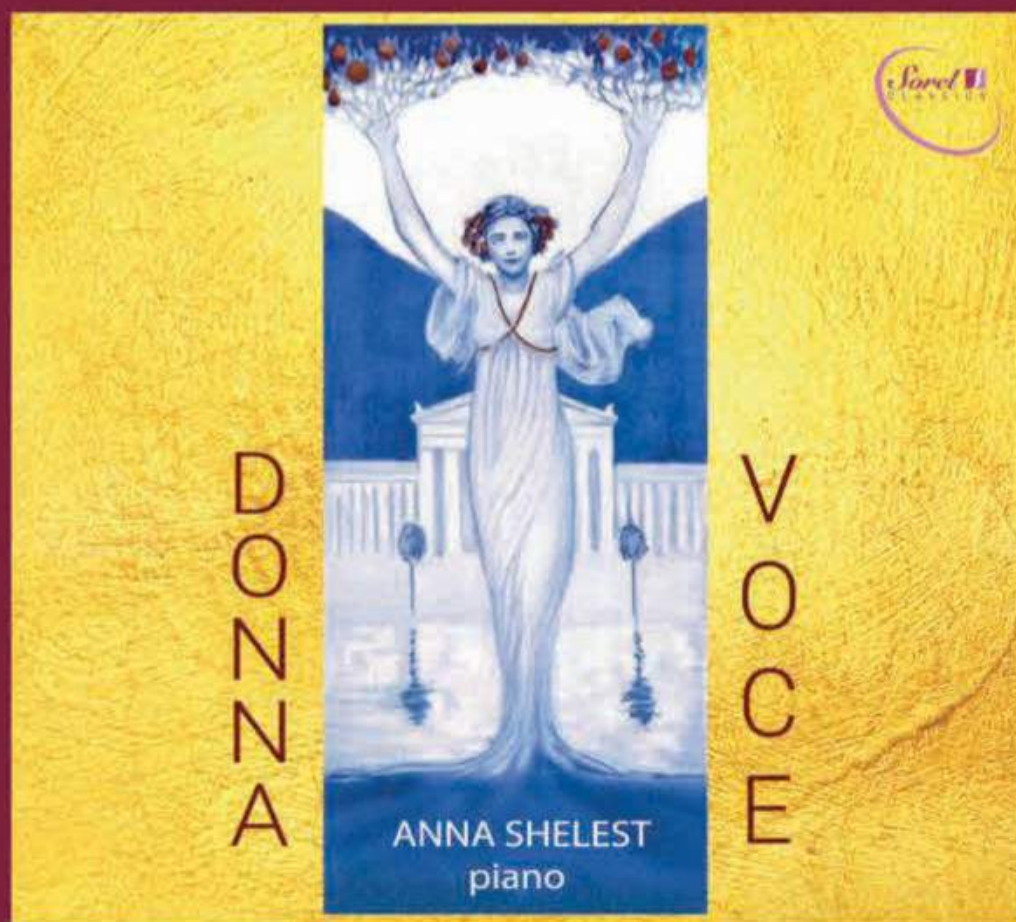
Alpha © ALPHA461 (80' • DDD)



Anima Eterna perform Schubert's ever-lovable Octet on instruments largely

from the early 19th century. And these instruments are wild. Lisa Shklyaver's clarinet wails at the introduction to the finale but sings in the gorgeous *cantabile* of the *Adagio*. Ulrich Hübner's natural horn can blast his colleagues into submission. There's a graininess to the strings and a glorious hollowness to Beltane Ruiz Molina's double bass. Modern instruments have developed to be better-behaved and to promote blend but these players exult in the timbral differences between them.

A few decades ago this sort of exercise would be have been marked by squeaks, thin tone and tuning that verged, let's say, on the ripe side. The advances in playing techniques since then, though, are evident in a performance such as this, where the challenges of gut strings and pre-Böhm woodwinds have been met and surmounted.



DONNA VOCE

ANNA SHELEST, piano

FANNY MENDELSSOHN Sonata in G Minor

AMY BEACH Ballade Op. 6; Four Sketches Op. 15

CLARA SCHUMANN Scherzo Op. 14

CÉCILE CHAMINADE Les Sylvains Op. 60
Concert Etudes Op. 35

LILI BOULANGER Prelude in D Flat

CHIAYU HSU Rhapsody Toccata

ANTON RUBINSTEIN

Piano Concerto No. 3 in G Major, Op. 45

Piano Concerto No. 5 in E Flat Major, Op. 94

ANNA SHELEST, piano

NEEME JÄRVI, conductor

ESTONIAN NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The second release in a series of recordings featuring Anton Rubinstein's works for piano and orchestra with Neeme Järvi and Anna Shelest.



SERGEI PROKOFIEV

Complete Piano Sonatas

NATALIA TRULL, piano.

Re-issue of the notable 1995 recording.

That string graininess can be spun into sugary sweetness, not least by leader Jakob Lehmann's application of portamento as an expressive device. Molina's bass is the firm foundation, with clarinet and horn taking the lion's share of melodic duty over the fertile topsoil of upper and middle strings. If you're on board with the historical instrument project then the tonal heterogeneity of this ensemble, complete with occasional key noise and bass pizzicatos that slap and buzz against the fingerboard, will have bags of appeal. The music, of course, is glorious; the evident joy with which it is performed is delicious.

Berwald's *Grand Septet* is slighter than the Schubert – with which it's roughly contemporary – but is presumably modelled on the identically scored Septet by Beethoven, which also provided the seed of Schubert's Octet. (Second violinist László Paulik sits out for the Berwald.) If it doesn't have the almost overwhelming melodic fecundity of the bigger work, it's full of the Swede's individual approach to harmony and details of scoring.

Isabelle Faust and a group of high-profile colleagues recently recorded the Schubert on period instruments, presenting a more demure, inward Octet. But the steampunk brazenness of this Belgian ensemble – more closely recorded, too – is its own advertisement. **David Threasher**

Schubert – selected comparison:

Faust et al (7/18) (HARM) HMM90 2263

Schubert

String Quartet No 14, 'Death and the Maiden', D810. String Quintet, D956^a

Cremona Quartet with ^a**Eckart Runge** vc

Audite (F) (2) AUDITE23 443 (92' • DDD)



The particular twist in the Quartetto di Cremona's coupling of Schubert's two

most popular late string masterpieces is their use of four instruments once owned by Nicolò Paganini – one of only six quartet 'sets' made by Antonio Stradivari. Under the fingers of these players (actually Genoese, despite the name of the ensemble), the instruments sound rich and even, recorded in an acoustic that allows the sound an attractive bloom. Combined with thoughtful interpretations, this makes the present two-disc package recommendable as a coupling of these two monuments of the repertoire.

It's the same coupling with which the Pavel Haas Quartet won the Chamber category of the 2014 *Gramophone* Awards.

And, really, comparisons between the two recordings are encouraging. Perhaps the Czech ensemble receive the slightly more intimate recording, although the halo of glowing resonance in their Prague studio is one of the many winning joys of their set. Tempos differ only slightly between the two recordings and both groups demonstrate an acuity born of long and pleasurable experience with both pieces.

The PHQ, however, display an extra degree of responsiveness, for example in the repeated accompaniment figures that power so much of this music from within. Not that it ever becomes simply dogged repetition in the Cremona Quartet's reading; but the Pavel Haas players inflect these rhetorical figures with a unique, innate understanding. The PHQ's bearers of the two works' overflowing melody – not limited to the first violinist – react just a touch more acutely, refusing to play anything quite the same way twice. Nobody will be unhappy with the finely played, deeply considered readings of the Quartetto di Cremona. But the Pavel Haas Quartet are something else, and will take a lot of beating. **David Threasher**

Selected comparison – coupled as above:

Pavel Haas, Qt, Ishizaka (10/13) (SUPR) SU4110-2

'Moderniste'

Escaich *Mecanic Song* for Piano and Wind Quintet **Hersant** *Osterlied* for Piano and Wind Quintet **Jolivet** *Serenade* for Wind Quintet **Magnard** *Quintet* for Piano and Winds, Op 8 **Milhaud** *Sonata* for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet and Piano, Op 47 **Nielsen** *Wind Quintet*, Op 43 **Les Vents Français** with **Éric Le Sage** pf

Warner Classics (M) (2) 9029 55487-0 (114' • DDD)



Les Vents Français have continued to set the pace in terms of wind-ensemble

repertoire since their *Gramophone* Award-winning 'Winds & Piano' (3/15), with 'Moderniste' offering a further selection of pieces which embody qualities of modernism in various and unexpected ways.

The first disc focuses on French music, with Milhaud's *Sonata* (1918) so typical of his music from the First World War in its polytonal tendencies and deft contrapuntal interplay between wind trio and piano – not least the *Doloureux*, which makes for a pointedly subdued finale. Occupying a parallel position almost three decades on, Jolivet's *Serenade* (1945) yet belies its cultural context in writing of unforced verve and elegance – only the final *Marche*

burlesque touches on more acute emotion. It is Magnard's *Quintet* (1894) that proves the greatest find here, a substantial work from his early maturity whose initial three movements draw a range of fastidious tonal and emotional shades from their subtly attenuated modality; only in the final *Joyeux* does it slightly outstay its welcome in its methodical progress to a crowning peroration.

The second disc is framed by French works of a more recent provenance. Philippe Hersant's *Osterlied* (2016) merges wind quintet and piano into an eloquent if not untroubled rhapsody on a Bach Lutheran hymn whose lyrical immediacy is a reminder of his expertise writing for film, whereas Thierry Escaich's *Mecanic Song* (2006) draws a wider range of expression from these same forces in what is an eventful series of variations tinged with the deftest irony. Between them comes Nielsen's *Wind Quintet* (1922) – still the finest work for this medium; one whose occasional wariness of gesture underlines its composer's ambivalence to modernism. This account is a little aloof in the initial movements but the grating dissonance of the ensuing *Praeludium* finds potent contrast in the easeful chorale that begins an ingratiating final set of variations.

Overall, a stylistically thought-provoking collection into which can be read as much about the governing concept as is wished. Recording and presentation are on a par with earlier issues in a series that will hopefully encompass a good deal more of this repertoire before it concludes.

Richard Whitehouse

'Music for a King'

'Chamber Works from the Court of Frederick the Great'

CPE Bach *Duetto*, Wq150 H598 **JS Bach** *Musikalisches Opfer*, BWV1079 – *Ricercar* a 3 **Benda** *Sonata* **Fasch** *Andantino con variazioni*, Op 17 **CH Graun** *Sonata*, GraunWV B:XVII:53 **JG Graun** *Quintetto*, GraunWV AV:XIV:14 **Müthel** *Sonata* **Quantz** *Trio Sonata*, QV2:20 **Florilegium**

Channel Classics (M) (2) CCS41819 (99' • DDD)



This latest from Florilegium is such a musicological feast that it had three-

quarters won me over before I even pressed 'play'. It is a wide-ranging two-disc celebration of Frederick the Great's talents as a connoisseur of music and talent-spotter of luminary-calibre musicians, taking in names such as

Johann Gottfried M \ddot{u} thel and Franz Benda alongside the expected likes of CPE Bach and Johann Joachim Quantz.

Harpsichordist Terence Charlston opens the programme alone with the three-part fugue from JS Bach's *Musical Offering* in a flowing reading carrying a satisfying impression of grandeur and cathedral-like architecture. Next to be honoured is Frederick's flute teacher Quantz, by means of a trio sonata probably written during his pre-Berlin Dresden years. Here it comes silken and rapport-filled, Charlston joined by flautist Florilegium founder Ashley Solomon, violinist Bojan Čičić and viola da gambist Reiko Ichise, with nicely weighted engineering allowing everyone to shine. A Graun double-bill then acts as cellist Jennifer Morsches's entry cue, with a nimbly graceful reading of Carl Heinrich Graun's cello sonata followed by an unusual quintet from his older brother Johann Gottlieb Graun, where some of the most characterful moments come via its leaping cello flourishes.

It's the second disc where things get especially interesting, though. Take the sweetness and fluidity with which Čičić brings off the sonata by Benda, the violinist-composer who Frederick engaged after hearing him practising through an open window. Or listen to the only flute sonata written by M \ddot{u} thel, who is interesting for being a composer who refused to compose on demand but only at the call of his inner muse, and whose musical style was described by an admiring Charles Burney as 'full of novelty, taste, grace and contrivance ... the passages are entirely his own'. Solomon's reading is beautifully rhapsodic. Unusually, it appears here with clavichord accompaniment in recognition of M \ddot{u} thel's preference for this instrument over the more usual harpsichord; and the wonderfully free, improvisational quality Julian Perkins brings to his duetting with Solomon makes this one of the album's highlights.

We also have Perkins to thank for another of the disc's standout works, this one a set of clavichord variations by the equally fascinating figure of Carl Friedrich Fasch. Primarily a champion of others (founder of the Berlin Singakademie and arranger of the Berlin premiere of Mozart's *Requiem* for his own funeral), Fasch was a self-critical personality who was reluctant for his own works to be performed in public. But while these sunnily lilting variations are hardly a masterpiece, they allow both the clavichord and its player to show their capabilities, and Perkins explores his instrument's full gamut of colours and personalities.

There is also something rather fun about the perfect, low-key climax to this array of intimate chamber treasures being courtesy of court maverick CPE Bach. His delicate G major Duet for flute and violin is one of only two known surviving duets of his, and Solomon and Čičić bring it off as an alertly intelligent and sensitive conversation. **Charlotte Gardner**

'The New York Concert'

Dvořák Piano Quintet No 2, Op 81 B155

Fauré Piano Quartet No 1, Op 15

Mozart Piano Quartet No 1, K478

Shostakovich Piano Quintet, Op 57 - Scherzo

Evgeny Kissin *pf* **Emerson Quartet**

DG ® ② 483 6574GH2 (99' • DDD)

Recorded live at the Stern Auditorium, Carnegie Hall, New York, April 27, 2018



Combining Evgeny Kissin and the Emerson Quartet was always going to be a juxtaposition of strong musical minds, as this set, recorded live at Carnegie Hall in April 2018, demonstrates. This is Kissin's first foray into chamber repertoire on disc and the Emerson rarely get together with pianists – a notable exception being in this very Dvořák Quintet with Menahem Pressler back in the early Nineties, of which more anon.

The set is launched with a striking reading of Mozart's G minor Piano Quartet, its already dramatic beginning given an even more chiselled profile thanks to the precision of the Emerson and Kissin's vehement accentuation. The *Andante*'s opening comes across as a bit foursquare in Kissin's hands – compare this with the charm of Paul Lewis or the flowing lines of the recent Skride Quartet version (see page 58). And in the finale, the new set can't compare with Lewis and the Leopold String Trio, who find wit and joy in abundance, alongside which this new set is somewhat po-faced, though technically immaculate.

Kissin has of late been turning his attention to French music in the concert hall – I recently heard him playing a selection of Debussy *Préludes* that came out sounding curiously Russian. So I was intrigued to hear what he and the Emerson players did with Fauré's First Piano Quartet. In terms of attention to detail and all matters technical they operate on a very high level. But while they capture the Romantic fervour of the first movement, it has a kind of heartiness

that underplays the moments of fragility: how much more effective are the Capuçon brothers with Dalberto and Caussé, despite a nasty recorded sound. The Scherzo has plenty of energy and lightness, particularly from the string players, though occasionally Kissin's accentuation weighs the music down somewhat – especially when compared with Domus's light-as-thistledown playing, which still sounds fresh more than three decades on. But in the slow movement, with its tolling piano accompaniment, the Emerson and Kissin are powerfully effective, bringing a palpable air of grief to the music, while the strings entwine beautifully as the music warms (disc 1, track 6, from 1'52"). The finale has all the churning sense of turmoil that you could want; but turn to Domus and you immediately feel that their greater airiness is much more in the spirit of the composer.

The Emerson's previous recording of the Dvořák A major Quintet had cellist David Finckel, now replaced by Paul Watkins. And, of course, in Menahem Pressler it had one of the most experienced of chamber pianists. The differences between their two accounts are apparent less than half a minute into the first movement, with a slight hesitation from Kissin that isn't in the earlier account. The discourse proceeds with a steely intent from all concerned, but it lacks the warmth of the Pavel Haas Quartet with Boris Giltburg (sample the duetting between piano and strings – disc 2, track 1, 4'12" on the new set – which is far less gentle than from the PHQ/Giltburg). The Dumka second movement throws up more differences: Pressler is beautifully fragile here, the Emerson's viola echoing and extending this mood. By comparison, Kissin is merely ponderous. Giltburg is far more subtle, and he and the PHQ dare to withdraw their sound to magical effect. The Emerson's new account comes more alive in the sprightly writing (for instance, from 7'38") but they don't reach the level of playfulness of the Elias Quartet with Jonathan Biss. The Furiant has a real drive to it, the technical issues holding no fear for these players, but compared to the Emerson's earlier account this is a little lacking in exuberance. And the finale is also rather weighed down by Kissin's accentuation – at times it feels somewhat like a piano concerto with supporting strings.

The more effective piece is the encore: the Scherzo from Shostakovich's Piano Quintet, where all concerned let rip to bracingly dramatic effect.

Harriet Smith



Glisteningly impressive: Third Coast Percussion combine diverse music by Philip Glass and Gavin Bryars

Mozart – selected comparisons:

Lewis, Leopold Stg Trio (10/03^R) (HYPE) CDA30011

Skride Pf Qt (ORFE) C946 191 (see page 58)

Fauré – selected comparisons:

Domus (7/95) (HYPE) CDA66766 or CDA30007

R & G Capuçon, Caussé, Dalberto

(12/11) (VIRG/ERAT) 070875-2

Dvořák – selected comparisons:

Pressler, Emerson Qt (9/94) (DG) 439 868-2GH

Biss, Elias Qt (12/12) (ONYX) ONYX4092

Gilburg, Pavel Haas Qt (11/17) (SUPR) SU4195-2

'Perpetuum'

Bryars *The Other Side of the River*

R Dillon *Ordering-Instincts* **Glass**

Perpetuum **P Martin** *Bend* **Skidmore**

Aliens with Extraordinary Abilities

Third Coast Percussion

Orange Mountain ⑤ ② OMM0132 (93' • DDD)



Philip Glass gets top billing here, unsurprisingly I suppose, for –

astonishingly – his first work for percussion ensemble, the four-player

Perpetuum (2018). Written for Third Coast Percussion, it is a virtuoso and entertaining showpiece in three parts with a brief cadenza prefacing the finale. Its momentum is not really that of a conventional *perpetuum mobile*, though there are elements of that at times, particularly in the toccata-like second part. Although there are gentler moments as well, *Perpetuum*'s busy discourse rarely rises to more elevated heights.

If *Perpetuum* is not the most exciting work here, there are others that fit the bill, not least the concluding work on disc 2, Gavin Bryars's *The Other Side of the River* (2016), also written for Third Coast Percussion. It is a glisteningly impressive single-span fantasia for the four players, serene and mesmeric in equal measure. By contrast, David Skidmore's *Aliens with Extraordinary Abilities* (2016) – the sole work on the 35-minute first disc – is a seven-movement suite of enormous diversity, ranging across minimalist euphony, modern-jazz like riffs, some discreet electronic manipulation and, in the brief finale, a not dissimilar quietude to Bryars's. It is the longest and most

invigorating work of the five and the most immediate in impact.

It is curious that the booklet accompanying the two discs only discusses Glass's piece, and makes a mere passing reference to the Bryars. I would have liked to know more of the inspiration behind the pieces by Skidmore, Peter Martin and Robert Dillon. As they are all members of Third Coast Percussion, is their reticence attributable to misguided modesty? If so, one can but be thankful it did not translate also into the composition and execution of these exciting and nicely diverse pieces. If *Bend* by Martin and Dillon's *Ordering-Instincts*, both composed in 2014, are more modest creations, they fit very nicely between the larger compositions. This is a hugely enjoyable set, intelligently programmed, brilliantly performed and closely recorded. What a shame Sean Connors did not pen a companion piece to close the circle! **Guy Rickards**

Find your
music on
www.qobuz.com

qobuz

Christopher Hogwood

Lindsay Kemp pays tribute to the early music pioneer whose legacy includes a huge and influential catalogue of recordings and, of course, the Academy of Ancient Music

Were he alive to read this article today, Christopher Hogwood would, one suspects, politely dismiss the idea of being an icon. He was surely always too gentlemanly to think himself that. But whatever it was – vision, sussedness, intellectual curiosity, academic dogmatism? – that drove him to follow the pathways of historically informed practice just as they were beginning to really lead somewhere, the wholeheartedness with which he did it turned him into a prolific and influential recording star.

Born in Nottingham in 1941, he studied music and Classics at Cambridge and could have made a mark either as a harpsichordist – his solo recordings of Byrd, Louis Couperin and Bach's *French Suites* deserve rediscovery, and he was the regular keyboard player for David Munrow's Early Music Consort of London – or as an elegant and insightful writer, editor and broadcaster. But it was the founding of the Academy of Ancient Music (AAM) in 1973 that would become his chief legacy.

While not the first orchestra to play Baroque and Classical music on the instruments of the time, the AAM *was* one of the first in Britain, and it operated in what was still a very small field. And right from the start it made a difference. Thanks to a strong and lasting relationship with Decca's L'Oiseau-Lyre label, it was not only able to experiment in the studio but also to spread its message widely.

The recordings of the early years – Arne, Stamitz, Geminiani, Handel and Vivaldi, plus collaborations with Simon Preston and the Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, in choral works such as Bach's *Magnificat*, Vivaldi's *Gloria* and a clutch of Haydn Masses – sounded fresh and revealing, even if playing standards in the days when musicians were still getting to grips with the technical challenges of period instruments can sound a little rough today. But above all the AAM proposed a plausible new sound world for 18th-century music: sprightly, lean-textured, crisply articulated and convincingly

illustrative of Hogwood's favourite metaphor of removing the dirty varnish from an old painting. By the end of the 1970s he and the AAM had begun an ear-opening cycle of stripped-down-and-rebuilt Mozart symphonies and had set down an even more illuminating *Messiah*, a groundbreaking recording which is still regularly reissued today.

Back in those days the word for all this was 'authentic', a rather arrogant-sounding term perhaps, and one that for some was a bit of a red rag. Not everyone admired Hogwood's work. He was sometimes criticised for unyielding tempos and a bland approach to phrasing, which were partly down to his apparent willingness to give anything a try which was suggested by historical evidence, and, by the same token, *not* to do

anything that the evidence did *not* support – and to consider that a justification for the results. He defended this 'non-interventionist' approach by claiming that the very idea of a podium maestro delivering a subjective interpretation (his preference was for 'directing' from the harpsichord) was alien to the music they were performing. But the results could still be exciting and revolutionary, and if today we expect more overt personality from period performers, Hogwood's ability to present a score simply and elegantly, pick the right tempo and let the beauties of the period-orchestra sound world

shine through remained musically attractive and relevant – above all, perhaps, in his recordings of Handel, Haydn and Mozart. And the collaborative approach to orchestral playing and directing which still exists in the period-performance world today is very much part of the AAM legacy.

Already in the 1980s, Hogwood was beginning to work with modern-instrument orchestras keen for a period-performance brush-up, especially in the US. 'He didn't have the greatest conducting technique,' recalled Ernest Fleischmann of Hogwood's 1981 debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic,

The new sound world was illustrative of his favourite metaphor of removing the dirty varnish from an old painting

DEFINING MOMENTS

•1967 – *Early doors*

Founder member, with David Munrow, of the Early Music Consort of London, in which he plays keyboards and harp

•1973 – *A new sound is born*

Founds the Academy of Ancient Music, whose first gathering is in September at the recording sessions for a disc of Arne overtures

•1980 – *'Like a refiner's fire'*

The AAM's recording of Handel's *Messiah* (recorded the previous year) is widely acclaimed for its fresh take on an old favourite

•1984 – *Write on*

Hogwood's typically erudite biography of Handel is published

•1987 – *Modern maestro*

Appointed Music Director of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, with whom he records Tippett, Stravinsky and Martinů among others. Further 'modern' orchestra posts follow in Australia, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, the Czech Republic and Poland

•2008 – *Just reward*

An Honorary Doctorate of Music at the University of Cambridge joins his long list of honours and awards




‘but he’s the most stimulating force in years.’ Before long, he was conducting in the opera house too, mainly in Handel, but while he was able to change the sound picture he was never a natural dramatist. Decca’s efforts, furthermore, to market him as a finger-pointing baton maestro through a Beethoven symphony cycle (unluckily overshadowed by the simultaneous appearance of Roger Norrington’s more exciting set for EMI) and even Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and *La clemenza di Tito* (the latter with Cecilia Bartoli in the cast) never really felt right – he always seemed happier sitting at the harpsichord or conducting with a pencil.

THE ESSENTIAL RECORDING



Handel *Messiah* Soloists; Choir of Christ Church, Oxford; AAM / Hogwood L'Oiseau-Lyre (4/80)
This epoch-maker challenged and changed ideas about what kind of piece *Messiah* really is.

The 1990s brought the start of two promising projects with the AAM that seemed to return to the research-enhanced discovery approach of former years, but record company fortunes were changing by then, and it is a shame that neither the meticulously planned Haydn

symphony cycle nor the Mozart piano concerto series with Robert Levin reached completion. By the time Hogwood died in 2014, the days of such ambitious combinations of musicianship and musicology seemed unlikely to return, and his quiet determination something all the more to be thankful for. 

Instrumental



Jeremy Nicholas listens to the debut album from Martin James Bartlett:

'In the vicious, visceral reading of the second of Prokofiev's "War Sonatas" Bartlett shows his true pianistic colours' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 75**



Michelle Assay on Lang Lang's educational 'Piano Book':

'The choice of repertoire is eclectic: from folk tunes to silly tunes (Chopsticks), from "classic favourites" to film themes' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 77**

JS Bach

Six Cello Suites, BWV1007-1012 (arr for violin)

Rachel Podger *vn*

Channel Classics (M) (2) (S) CCSSA41119

(128' • DDD/DSD)



Because she can; and why not? Rachel Podger has earned the right to deal briskly

with the rights and wrongs of appropriating the Cello Suites. It was Gustav Leonhardt, no less, who transcribed them for harpsichord (recorded by Roberto Loreggian on Brilliant Classics). Viola players, guitarists and gambists have long hugged them close. Like Leonhardt and Kim Kashkashian (ECM, 10/18) before her, Podger adopts the Suites with bravura and the confidence that while their nature may change, their stature will not be diminished.

By shifting the first five Suites up a fifth – the First from G to D and so on – she retains their open-string architecture. Does the transposition come as a wrench? Yes, if the movement between modern and Baroque pitch also unsettles you. Bach's G major was not ours, and transposition was an indispensable facet of his art as an organist. In B flat, the semitone intervals in the Fourth Suite are (to my ear) counterintuitively wider than the original E flat tonality.

Shorter strings allow for graceful ornamentation of giges beyond the reach of even the most fleet-fingered cellist. Podger treads lightly on the Courante of No 2 where cellists dig deep, but she takes care to preserve the ungainly chords of the same suite's Minuet. The noble sweep of the Prelude to the Third is replaced by a manner altogether more sprightly, and she lays down a gauntlet with the brusque closing cadence. Freest in form, the Preludes undergo the happiest transformations – taken up the octave, the Prelude to the Sixth sounds more than ever like a shanty – whereas the sarabandes

demand all of Podger's bow control and even then their essential gravity is necessarily modulated with the smile of a more flowing pulse.

Now cast in G minor, the Fifth Suite – most contemplative of the six – is drawn into the world of the Sonatas and Partitas. Even here the cello's body language casts a long shadow, but Fassbaender's *Winterreise* followed its own path, and so does Podger's Bach. **Peter Quantrill**

JS Bach

Das wohltemperirte Clavier, Book 1, BWV846-869

Steven Devine *hpd*

Resonus (M) (2) RES10239 (111' • DDD)



Steven Devine's traversal of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book 1, with Book 2

to follow, is both thoughtful and thought-provoking. He plays a double-manual harpsichord from 2000 by Colin Booth, based on a single-manual instrument of Fleischer in Hamburg, 1710, and uses Kirnberger III tuning.

Devine's readings are flowing and logical, with variety brought to the entire set first and foremost by his extraordinarily sensitive articulation. In the more toccata-like preludes, his subtly applied *tenuto* touch keeps things crisp and moving, without monotony. His acute sense of the singing line clarifies even the most complex textures.

Each pair is imbued with vivid characterisation. The C sharp minor Prelude makes a strong case for the full ornamentation, its plaintive lyricism in striking contrast to the solemn impetus of the five-voice fugue that follows. The D major Prelude evokes an accompanied violin sonata as preparation for the French Overture-style Fugue, which fairly bursts with pomp and grandeur. If an affable A major Prelude precedes a Fugue that strikes as a bit ginger for its 9/8 time signature, things heat up considerably

with an intense A minor Prelude and its Fugue of unstoppable determination.

While Devine's Book 1 may not replace some of my current favourites – including those by Ottavio Dantone (Arts), Christophe Rousset (Aparté, 6/16) and Pierre Hantaï (Mirare, 6/03) – its solid and considered music-making certainly warrants comparison with them. The recorded sound is fully dimensional and true to life. **Patrick Rucker**

JS Bach

'Bach to the Future'

Erbarm dich mein, o Herre Gott, BWV721.

Fantasia, BWV572. Fantasia and Fugue, BWV542.

Fugue, BWV578. Herzlich tut mich verlangen,

BWV727. In dir ist Freude, BWV617. Passacaglia

and Fugue, BWV582. Ricercare a 6, BWV1079.

Tocatta and Fugue, BWV565

Olivier Latry *org*

La Dolce Volta (F) LDV69 (78' • DDD)

Played on the grand organ of Notre-Dame, Paris



Ah, this is more like it! Bach played with no hang-ups, using the full

resources of a magnificent organ (the Cavaillé-Coll in Paris's Notre-Dame Cathedral, which has happily survived the recent fire largely intact), happily discarding any ideas of authenticity and completely shorn of that kind of hallowed reserve with which so many organists treat it. This is a joyous celebration of Bach's music, not a kneeling, hands-together, head-bowed worship of it.

Olivier Latry has mischievously titled his disc after a popular sci-fi movie which first appeared, coincidentally, on the 300th anniversary of Bach's birth. The booklet photograph of the console looks very space-age, with its rows of stops and keys strangely distorted by the camera lens to resemble the pilot's-eye view of a space ship coming in to land in some cavernous alien space. The whole idea of the disc, as propounded in the astonishingly thick,

67-page multilingual booklet, is that here is Bach played by a 21st-century organist for 21st-century ears.

The playing is fabulous, no question about that, while the interpretations are idiosyncratic, to put it mildly. What Latry has added to Liszt's version of the BWV542 Fantasia does not bear close scrutiny – but, boy, does it make for exciting listening! I wonder how far his tongue was in his cheek when he decided to transform the uninspiring *Erbarm dich mein* into an aural image of an alien monster, growling the chorale melody as it plods slowly along, or when he added bells to the repeated pedal figure of *In dir ist Freude*. Weird and wonderful effects (consciously borrowed from Stokowski) adorn the ubiquitous Toccata and Fugue in D minor, although the *Pièce d'orgue* (BWV572) gets a pretty straitlaced performance, big reed-encrusted crescendo during the *Grave* section notwithstanding. Even the most sanctimonious Bach purist could not fail to be impressed with Latry's impeccable tracing of the contrapuntal lines in the BWV578 and BWV542 fugues, or with his gloriously fluent and magisterial account of the Passacaglia and Fugue.

Lots of people of a purist inclination will be horrified by this. But those of us who believe Bach's music can not only survive but actually be positively reinvigorated by being taken out of its dusty glass case and injected with futuristic gadgets will feel we have been transported into a wonderful new galaxy. **Marc Rochester**

Beethoven

'Piano Sonatas, Vol 8'

Piano Sonatas – No 8, 'Pathétique', Op 13; No 10, Op 14 No 2; No 22, Op 54; No 31, Op 110

Jonathan Biss *pf*

Meyer Media © MM19040 (64' • DDD)

Beethoven

Piano Sonatas – No 1, Op 2 No 1; No 10, Op 14 No 2; No 21, 'Waldstein', Op 53; No 22, Op 54

Angela Hewitt *pf*

Hyperion © CDA68220 (77' • DDD)



Jonathan Biss and Angela Hewitt are both nearing the end of their Beethoven sonata cycles, which have evolved very gradually over more than a decade. It's striking just how different their approaches are, as the two sonatas these discs have in common – Op 14 No 2 and 54 – demonstrate.



Graceful ornamentation: Rachel Podger plays Bach's Cello Suites on the violin

Hewitt begins with the very first sonata, the F minor, Op 2 No 1, and she emphasises the driving energy of the opening movement with a brisk accentuation that you will find exhilarating or brusque according to taste. The *Adagio* sounds somewhat forced, Goode more naturally poetic in his ornamentation, though the Menuetto comes off more convincingly. Hewitt is slower than some (Goode included) in the furiously energetic *Prestissimo* finale and I find her most convincing in the softer moments; in the louder ones her accentuation can grate.

Biss launches his disc with the *Pathétique*; the recording is close enough to catch occasional breathing, which initially distracted me, though the ear does adjust. I like the way he makes such a popular

piece his own without resorting to exaggeration, with a very focused *Allegro di molto* and a simple songfulness to the *Adagio* theme, which is pedalled with subtlety, while that quality of haloed sound continues into the finale, which is combined with a tearing energy – faster than either Lewis or Goode but winningly so.

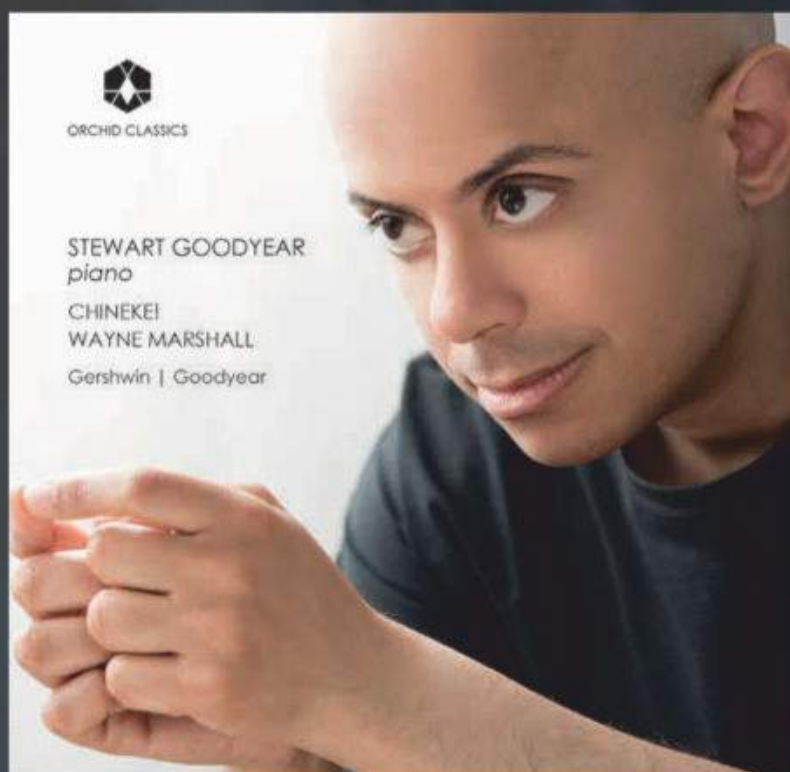
The different sound qualities that Biss and Hewitt bring is not just down to their different breeds of piano – a Steinway and a Fazioli: the opening movement of Op 14 No 2 is a far more cushioned affair in Biss's hands, while he takes the main theme of the second, on which Beethoven builds his variations, at a slightly more lilting pace, one not dissimilar to Goode, though the latter finds even more ways to soften and

OUT NOW

STEWART GOODYEAR

Gershwin Rhapsody in Blue
Goodyear Callaloo Suite

Chineke! Orchestra
Wayne Marshall



ON TOUR

May 23rd **The Dome, Brighton**
May 25th **The Forum, Bath**
May 26th **The Apex, Bury St Edmonds**
June 13th **Queen Elizabeth Hall, London**
June 14th **The Anvil, Basingstoke**
June 15th **Symphony Hall, Birmingham**
June 16th **Bridgewater Hall, Manchester**

Visit www.orchidclassics.com/Goodyear
for more information



LEWES FESTIVAL OF SONG 2019
5-7TH JULY

St. Anne's Church, Lewes

Friday 5th at 7.30pm
'IN SWEET MUSIC IS SUCH ART'
Purcell, Dowland, Britten, Tippett and Gurney
with counter-tenor Erik Kallo, tenor Michael Bell, pianist Ana Manastireanu and lutenist Augustin Cornwall-Irving

Saturday 6th at 1pm
ANY WOMAN'S HEART
Women's lives glimpsed in a kaleidoscope of song
with mezzo Lucy Schauer, soprano Lucy Hall and pianist Nancy Cooley

Saturday 6th at 7.30pm
'PROUD SONGSTERS'
Schubert, Brahms, Ravel, Strauss and Finzi
with baritone James Newby and pianist Ian Tindale

Sunday 7th at 1pm
'SONGS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME'
Dvorák, Debussy, Barber and English songs
with mezzo Rebecca Leggett and pianist Ella O'Neill

Sunday 7th at 7.30pm
'BLOW BUGLE, BLOW, SET THE WILD ECHOES FLYING'
Britten: Les Illuminations and Serenade for tenor, horn and strings
Holst: St Paul's Suite
Ed Hughes: Flint
with The Corelli Ensemble, conductor Sian Edwards, tenor William Morgan, soprano Alison Rose, and horn player Zachary Hayward

Festival Pass £65
Fri / Sat evening £15
Sun evening £20
Lunchtimes £12
Under 16s half-price

Tickets via the website
www.lewesfestivalofsong.co.uk
Also from Lewes Tourist Information Centre: 01273 483 448
lewes.tic@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk
Or on the door

www.lewesfestivalofsong.co.uk
Patron: Mark Padmore | LEWES TOWN COUNCIL | THE CHALK CLIFF TRUST



MÄNTTÄ MUSIC FESTIVAL
IN MÄNTTÄ, FINLAND

STEINWAY & SONS

THE MEETING POINT FOR FRIENDS OF PIANO MUSIC
July 31 – August 4, 2019
WWW.MANTANMUSIIKKIJUHLAT.FI

Mercedes-Benz, STEINWAY PIANO GALLERY HELSINKI, SERLACHIUS MUSEO, Taiteen edistämiskeskus, Centre for Contemporary Arts, Arts Promotion Centre Finland

vary the theme itself. I particularly like Biss's first variation, a mix of charm and piquancy. Hewitt has a tendency to overplay the theme itself, so that the joke falls flat. She maintains a tight control over the finale, however, which comes across better.

Their readings of Op 54 again demonstrate their different approaches, Biss finding a nonchalance to the opening movement that makes the contrast with the octave outbreak potent indeed. Hewitt instead likes to guide her listener, demonstrating this point and that, which can distract. Her finale sounds too fragmented as a result, whereas Biss offers something more honed. I find Goode more effective than either, producing a wonderfully unruffled surface.

Hewitt precedes this with the *Waldstein*, emphasising the shocking juxtaposition of unlike with unlike in these two consecutive opus numbers. As you might expect, her way with the fingery textures of the first movement is dexterous and effortless, while the repeated left-hand chords have a crispness about them. But I find as a whole it lacks tension: the passage from 5'19", for instance, surely demands a degree of mystery as Beethoven takes us on a magical sequence; it is too clean-cut here. And the sense of intensity building through the movement is also in short supply compared to, say, Goode, who whips up a real storm, or Lewis, closer in tempo to Hewitt but with more sense of menace underlying the C majorishness. And in the *Adagio molto*, nicely paced, she doesn't truly sustain the melody, making for a slightly chopped-up feel. Interestingly, Lewis is slower, but he manages to sustain Beethoven's discourse very powerfully. Again, there's a lack of tension at the start of Hewitt's finale, and she makes rather too much of the triplet accompaniment from 1'18", lessening the sense of joyous release. To my ears, pianists such as Lewis and Goode are much more potent in this sonata as a whole.

Biss ends his disc with Op 110. His first movement speaks of long association with the music, with a nice sense of inevitability about it, and his Scherzo has none of the agogic distortion that coloured Sudbin's recent account, though I do find Biss a little short on firepower – especially compared to Osborne, who conjures a sense of steel through this brief movement whether playing *pp* or *ff*. His *Adagio ma non troppo* opening to the finale is a less desolate affair than that of Osborne but the inevitability with which he builds the fugue is impressive indeed, his command of textures and line always compelling. If in the end it

doesn't have quite the emotional turmoil of Osborne, it's a fine achievement nonetheless. **Harriet Smith**

Piano Sonatas – selected comparison:

Goode (3/94) (NONE) 7559 79363-8

Opp 13 & 53 – selected comparison:

Lewis (12/06) (HARM) HMC90 1903/5

Op 110 – selected comparison:

Sudbin (4/19) (BIS) BIS2208

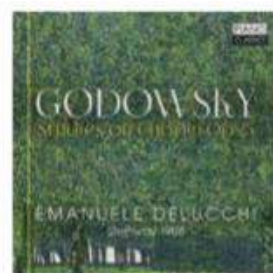
Osborne (5/19) (HYPER) CDA68219

Godowsky

Studies on Chopin's Op 25 Études
and Trois Nouvelles études

Emanuele Delucchi *pf*

Piano Classics © PCL10182 (77' • DDD)



With this release, the young Italian (b1987) becomes only the fourth pianist to have recorded all of Godowsky's *Studies on Chopin's Études*. A year ago he joined Francesco Libetta and Carlo Grante as the only pianists in history to have played them all in concert. Why are these two events significant? Because, whatever one thinks of them musically (and some people loathe them), the Chopin-Godowsky Studies remain the *ne plus ultra* of polyphonic writing for the keyboard – and it takes an exceptional pianist of considerable skill (as well as mental and physical stamina) to negotiate the relentless technical and musical demands that Godowsky makes. Personally – and I write as Godowsky's biographer – I am happy to hear just a handful at a time, no matter who the pianist might be; I think that is the best way to appreciate the teeming detail and the occasional overload of contrapuntal ingenuity.

Having said that, it has been a real pleasure to listen to the second part of the cycle in the hands of this brilliant talent (I welcomed Vol 1, devoted to the Studies on Op 10, in the Awards issue 2017). Delucchi, as on his previous two Godowsky recordings, has opted for a mellow-toned 1906 Steinway Model D which lends warm colours and a period flavour to proceedings (1906, after all, was in the decade that Godowsky established himself as one of the greatest pianists of his generation).

This second volume begins with the four studies derived from Chopin's *Trois Nouvelles études* (Nos 44, 45, 45a and 46) and No 48, the final study in Godowsky's numbering, which combines Op 10 No 11 with Op 25 No 3, a performance that challenges even Marc-André Hamelin (his benchmark set on Hyperion, 5/00).

Not all of Delucchi's performances quite reach that exalted height: Hamelin's greater ease and good humour (yes!) in No 34, for example (Op 25 No 5 turned into a mazurka), and the witty polonaise treatment of Op 25 No 4 being cases in point. Elsewhere, the Italian more than holds his own: try No 27 (the waltz version of Op 25 No 2) and the arrangement for left hand alone of Op 25 No 9. Realistically recorded, good booklet, and all in all a fine addition to the increasingly valuable Piano Classics catalogue. **Jeremy Nicholas**

Rachmaninov

Complete Preludes

Boris Giltburg *pf*

Naxos © 8 574025 (80' • DDD)



Boris Giltburg continues his survey of Rachmaninov with the complete Preludes, launching the disc with a refreshingly straight account of the C sharp minor Prelude. His sensitivity is abundantly demonstrated and he's always careful to avoid climaxes becoming overbearing or, heaven forbid, percussive. The G flat major Prelude that ends Op 23 is a good example of his songfulness, while the fifth of the Op 32 set has a lovely airborne quality, better conveying its flickering delicacy than Lugansky, who is a shade slower. In a similar vein, the eighth Prelude of Op 23 is another highlight.

Giltburg's preoccupation with clarity of texture means that the tumultuous climax of Op 32 No 8 in A minor never becomes overbearing, and this makes fine contrast with the airy writing, which he dispatches with ease. This is followed by a wonderfully rich reading of the A major Prelude, while the siciliano rhythm of No 10 has a solemn tread, though Lympny finds a stronger drive through the middle section.

Where I have slight reservations about the playing is in some of the more outspoken preludes. The second of Op 23, for instance, softens where I want it to drive forwards, with Giltburg slightly underplaying its waterfalls of sound. And the luscious melody that emerges at 1'00" is a touch timid compared to Lympny's reading. The gruff march of No 5, too, has more potency in the hands of Lugansky, though the inner section is done with great sensitivity, Giltburg revealing the duetting lines quite beautifully. And of the Op 32 Preludes, No 6 doesn't create the driving terror to be found in Lympny, brilliantly ireful, or Lugansky, truly demonic.

The driving drama of the C major Prelude that opens Op 32 also has more poetry than in many accounts. Lympny whips up a wondrous storm, while her contrasting filigree is finely spun. Choice will come down to personal taste, as it will in the G sharp minor, which is pearlescent in Giltburg's hands but without the glistening virtuosity that Lympny brings to it. The closing Prelude of Op 32 sums up Giltburg's approach – opening with a quietude that harks back to the early C sharp minor Prelude, while the turmoil that follows is presented with an absolute command of texture and clarity but without the storminess some bring to it, though its closing chords have a glorious richness.

Harriet Smith

Selected comparisons:

Lympny, r1941-42 (10/17) (ELOQ) ELQ482 6266

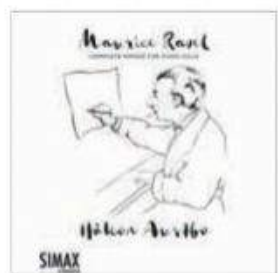
Lugansky (4/18) (HARM) HMM90 2339

Ravel

'Complete Works for Piano Solo'

Håkon Austbø *pf*

Simax (M) ② PSC1366 (138' • DDD)



Given the consistent pianistic and stylistic excellence of his Janáček, Scriabin and

Messiaen cycles and stimulating Chopin Ballades (9/15), Håkon Austbø's Ravel frustratingly hits and misses. *Gaspard de la nuit*'s demanding outer movements fall short of the fluidity and demonic drive distinguishing a good number of superior versions (Pogorelich, Argerich, Osborne, Schuch and others), although the tolling repeated B flats and billowy chords of 'Le gibet' magically soar and float. In *Le tombeau de Couperin*, Austbø makes heavy going of the Prelude's ornaments and close-lying counterpoint, yet calibrates his voicing of the Fugue in micro-increments. If the Forlane lacks the fluent simplicity of Rubinstein's incomparable early-Sixties recording, Austbø's unexpected accents and rubatos hold interest more than his less-than-bracing Toccata does.

While Austbø captures the wistful lyricism of 'Oiseaux tristes' and demarcates the dynamic plateaus of 'La vallée des cloches' to three-dimensional effect, the sultry rhythms of 'Alborada del gracioso' have no vitality and spark whatsoever, nor is there any real suppleness in the chattering passagework of 'Noctuelles' beyond Austbø's meticulous rendering of the notes. But the pianist gives welcome emphasis to the often underplayed linear makeup of *Valses nobles et sentimentales* by

basically shaping each movement from the bottom up. And what sounds superficially choppy in the *Sonatine*'s central movement actually represents Austbø's scrupulous adherence to Ravel's phrase-markings and voice-leading. These qualities also inform the shorter pieces, including a broader and less shimmering *Jeux d'eau* than you might expect, packed with ear-catching inner lines and accented up-beats.

The big question is whether Austbø's undeniably interesting moments justify springing for an inconsistent Ravel cycle in the face of formidable competition from Bertrand Chamayou, Steven Osborne, Alexandre Thauraud, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet and Abbey Simon.

Jed Distler

Schubert

Piano Sonata No 21, D960. Four Impromptus, D899. Ständchen, D957 No 4 (arr Liszt, S560/7)

Khatia Buniatishvili *pf*

Sony Classical (P) 19075 84120-2 (83' • DDD)



The Georgian pianist Khatia Buniatishvili, now just into her thirties, is an artist

of strong convictions but it is still a bold move to choose D960 for her first Schubert recording. It's an equally strong move to channel Millais's *Ophelia* for the cover and booklet photos, where she also offers musings entitled 'Notes of a Feminist'. The link to Schubert? Unclear.

The playing is more clearly focused, however, though it's a reading of extremes that will either beguile or frustrate. The sonata's opening is a breathy affair, each phrase almost cherished to death, while there's a notable speeding-up (unmarked) through the passage of semiquaver accompaniment, so much so that when the main theme returns against triplet writing it's at a completely different tempo to the start. All this contributes to a sense of a lack of a constant pulse, leaving the listener in danger of losing their way. Buniatishvili pushes things still further in the development, where there's also some characterfully skittish playing – when she's not daydreaming she can offer a powerful sense of narrative, just not often enough.

The problems are at their most extreme in the *Andante sostenuto*, where her tempo is *veeery* slow. To give you an idea, it lasts 14 and a half minutes; Uchida, Zimerman and Andsnes are all four minutes shorter, while it's a world away from Pires's highly communicative, genuinely flowing account, which manages to be highly personal yet

entirely in the service of the composer. With the switch to A major Buniatishvili again speeds up as she reaches the triplet section (unmarked) – if it's supposed to sound spontaneous, it doesn't, merely a tad unstable.

Hints of what could have been come in the Scherzo, which is fleet and effortless; the same cannot be said of the Trio, though, whose accents are about as subtle as a Versace logo. The finale sets off at a convincing pace, with a sense of both the sweep and the detail of what is unfolding before our ears. The climaxes are perhaps a little overblown, but otherwise it's persuasive. Unfortunately it's not enough to ameliorate the issues of the first two movements.

The D899 Impromptus are also a mixed bag – The G flat major (No 3) works best as it's allowed to speak for itself; No 4 is on the fast side, though technically it can't be faulted (but turn to Uchida and you find much more of a pensive quality underlying the surface effect); No 2 is also somewhat rushed, Zimerman finding a lyrical perfection here. And the First gets weighed down by overly prissy phrasing, which can't compete with Lupu's tolling sadness or Zimerman's eloquence at a more flowing tempo.

Buniatishvili closes with the Liszt/Schubert 'Ständchen', which is a little on the slow side for my taste – I prefer Marc-André Hamelin, who brings out the glorious melody and counter-melody more convincingly. There's no doubting Buniatishvili's considerable pianistic powers, nor her abundant imagination, but overall this seems a disc that promotes her rather than Schubert's sublime music.

Harriet Smith

Piano Sonata No 21 – selected comparisons:

Andsnes (4/05) (EMI/WARN) 557901-2

Pires (5/13) (DG) 477 8107GH

Zimerman (10/17) (DG) 479 7588GH

Sonata, Impromptus – selected comparison:

Uchida (5/97^R) (DECC) 475 6282DB8

Impromptus – selected comparisons:

Lupu (2/84^R) (DECC) 460 975-2DM

Zimerman (5/91) (DG) 423 612-2

Schubert

Piano Sonatas – No 19, D958; No 20, D959. Four Impromptus, D899. Drei Klavierstücke, D946

Sir András Schiff *pf*

ECM New Series (P) ② 481 7252 (124' • DDD)



Here's an analogy for András Schiff's second disc in his survey of Schubert's

late works on his Brodmann fortepiano. Imagine a dark room that you're used to seeing illuminated by electricity and whose every corner you believe you know – that's Schubert's C minor and A major Sonatas, the D899 Impromptus and the D946 *Drei Klavierstücke*. Now turn the light off and hold a candle – or perhaps better a chandelier, since András Schiff's instrument is a six-octave pianoforte with four pedals – step into the same room and observe how everything seems to take on a new shape, colour and meaning, without having changed in essence. Yes, it takes a while for the eyes (ears) to get used to the new light (timbre) and its many subtle variations, and above all to forget about modern lightbulbs. You might never fully get used to the experience; but if you do, you may find yourself moved to tears and wish you could be surrounded by that aura for ever. The second of the *Drei Klavierstücke* alone should be enough to convince you to dwell here enraptured.

It is hard to speak here of drama and a sense of journey in the way that, say, Uchida's readings evoke. And the colours are more or less dictated by the instrument, which, although it allows for softer-than-soft shades and provides some solutions for some of the most

awkward of Schubert's instructions, cannot match the quasi-orchestral textures offered by a modern piano. But instead what magical melancholy, and above all modesty, it enables. Schubert never cries loudly; his tears flow quietly. Schiff is a true master of the instrument and knows how to connect its resources to his individual, yet never mannered, Schubertian vision. Nor does he force anything beyond what the instrument allows, not even in the most famously turbulent episodes of the two sonatas. These remain intimate confessions of a generous soul.

Schiff is essentially a more private, less Beethovenian exponent than his principal fortepiano rival, Andreas Staier, and he cultivates a more pronouncedly 'olden' timbre. Both pianists are generous in their application of the sustaining pedal but Schiff's instrument seems to have more distinct registers and variety of timbre. So if you are allergic to the fortepiano, perhaps Staier offers an easier transition; but if your concern is for emotional Schubertian truth, uniquely illuminated, Schiff's new discs are boundlessly rewarding.

Michelle Assay

Sonatas – selected comparison:

Staier (7/97⁸) (ELAT) 2564 60442-2

Weinberg

Solo Violin (Cello) Preludes, Op 100 (arr Kremer)

Gidon Kremer *vn*

Accentus © ACC30476 (47' • DDD)



The centenary of Mieczysław Weinberg's birth augurs a wealth of

significant new recordings, one of which is undoubtedly this release from Accentus. Solo instrumental works came to the forefront of the composer's output over his final three decades – the 24 Preludes having been written in 1967 for, but never played by, Mstislav Rostropovich and not heard in public until 1995. As transcribed by Gidon Kremer, whose latter-day commitment to the Weinberg cause has been unstinting, they can now take their place as a landmark of the solo violin repertoire.

Written in the wake of his opera *The Passenger*, these Preludes find Weinberg in combative and even capricious mood. Unlike Chopin or Shostakovich, he tackled the sequence not as a circle of fifths but as an arc of 12 ascending then 12 descending semitones – implying a two-part structure. Equally plausible are intensifying three-part or even four-movement formats, with

London Symphony Orchestra

THE YOUNG DEBUSSY

François-Xavier Roth
Edgar Moreau

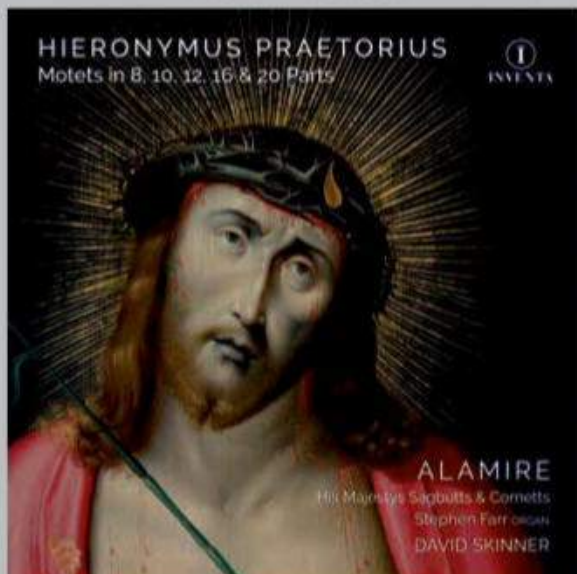
Debussy *Première Suite*
Lalo *Cello Concerto*
Wagner *Overture: Tannhäuser*
Massenet *Le Cid (Suite de Ballet)*

Available now
Blu-ray + DVD

Isolive.co.uk

LSO

I
INVENTA



The first release on new early music label Inventa Records, award-winning choral ensemble Alamire under its director David Skinner, performs the large-scale Motets of Hieronymus Praetorius (1560–1629).

Sumptuously sonorous and with inventive harmonies: these rarely recorded works shows northern Germany's noble response to the Italians, and to the Roman Counter-Reformation.

Alamire are joined by His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts and organist Stephen Farr.



J.S. Bach: Das wohltemperierte Klavier (The Well-Tempered Clavier), Volume 1
Steven Devine



François Couperin:
Quatrième Livre de Pièces de Clavecin
Guillermo Brachetta



resonus classics
www.resonusclassics.com



Walewein Witten
Piano Sonatas by Haydn, Mozart & Beethoven



Dieterich Buxtehude:
Membra Jesu nostri, BuxWV 75
Orpheus Britannicus; Neue Vialles;
Andrew Arthur (director)

Follow us on: [@resonusclassics](https://twitter.com/resonusclassics) [/resonusclassics](https://www.facebook.com/resonusclassics)

BUDLEIGH MUSIC FESTIVAL

July 12th to 20th 2019

All Evening
Concerts £18
each

With performances by Soloists of the 12 Ensemble, Sansara, Pleyel Ensemble, Festival Orchestra, Trio Sitkovetsky, Martin James Bartlett, Elias Quartet and Devon Opera.

Plus, enjoy free lunchtime performances showcasing the talents of local and upcoming artists.

**CLASSICAL
MUSIC ON
THE JURASSIC
COAST**

making music

Box Office:
01395 445275

Discover more at: www.budleighmusicfestival.co.uk
where you can also book online from Monday 13th May



**53rd International
Vocal Competition
LiedDuo
's-Hertogenbosch
Netherlands
20-24 Nov 2019**

More than € 15,000 prize money

Jury

Dame Felicity Lott (President)
Jard van Nes | Thomas Oliemans
Graham Johnson | David Selig
Mirjam Wijzenbeek
(Concertgebouw Amsterdam)

First Round

17 May 2019 Zeist
30 June 2019 's-Hertogenbosch
TBA Zürich
YouTube

**54th International
Vocal Competition
Opera | Oratorio
2020**

ivc.nu

pivotal roles assumed by the preludes in question. Throughout this cycle, pieces rich in stylistic or personal allusion are offset by others which focus on abstract musical essentials.

All in all, this is a fascinating and expressively inclusive opus to which Kremer does justice with his resourceful and idiomatic transcription, his tensile and incisive tone only abetting the music's plangency. In a live context his readings have often been complemented by overhead projections from the Lithuanian photographer Antanas Sutkus, whose images afford an overview of life in the final decades of the Soviet bloc the more affecting for their starkness and restraint, and which might profitably have been included as a DVD adjunct to the present performance.

No matter: this is a self-recommending release, and not least for those who already have the original cello version in its pioneering account by Josef Feigelsen (Naxos) or the more recent version by Marina Tarasova (Northern Flowers, 12/18). The sound has a tangible immediacy and realism, while the booklet features an introduction from Kremer and an informative essay by Verena Mogl. A pity, though, that she does not give Viktor Kubatsky as having premiered Shostakovich's Cello Sonata in 1934 – rather than the (then) seven-year-old Rostropovich! **Richard Whitehouse**

'Love and Death'

JS Bach *Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ*, BWV639 (arr Busoni). *Jesu, joy of man's desiring* (arr Hess) **Granados** *Goyescas*, Op 11 – No 5, *El amor y la muerte* (Balada) **Liszt** *Années de pèlerinage – année 2: Italie – Three Petrarch Sonnets*. *Liebestraum*, S541 No 3 **Prokofiev** *Piano Sonata No 7*, Op 83 **Schumann** *Widmung*, Op 25 No 1 (arr Liszt, S566a) **Wagner** *Isoldens Liebestod* (arr Liszt, S447)

Martin James Bartlett *pf*

Warner Classics © 9029 54632-0 (74' • DDD)



It is five years since Martin James Bartlett won the BBC Young

Musician of the Year competition, impressing not merely with his musicianship and keyboard technique but with his engaging stage presence. Here was an artist who, unlike many of his peers, actually seemed to enjoy being on stage, a bespectacled, slightly quirky young man with an endearing smile to whom it was hard not to warm.

Since then, he has played out his apprenticeship and has now signed to Warner Classics. His debut album is very different to what, perhaps, one expected. Except for the final item, Prokofiev's Sonata No 7, exuberance, smiles and quirkiness are nowhere in evidence, to be replaced by a severe and subdued solemnity. To Bartlett, 'Love' seems to be as painful and unhappy an experience as 'Death' if the first nine works are anything to go by. He opens with Busoni's arrangement of *Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ* in a performance of breathtaking beauty. One rarely hears a concert grand purr like this, a quality that pertains to all nine works and for which his producer and engineer must take some credit.

Listening to this and indeed to the succeeding eight items I wondered whether Bartlett was not more concerned at times with gorgeous tone production and the observation of intimate details (important as they are, of course) than he was with the forward momentum and overall structure of a piece. It all sounds like a studio recording played with great care and musicality but little spontaneity. Too much of it shares the same character. Good as it is, I think Bartlett is better than this.

But when we come to the 10th and final work, it is a different matter. Here is the standout performance on the disc, in which Bartlett shows his true pianistic colours with a vicious, visceral reading of the second of Prokofiev's three 'War Sonatas'. Whether the work quite justifies its place in a 'Love and Death' programme is a moot point (perhaps Bartlett sees it as the composer's reaction to the murders by the NKVD of his friends Vsevolod and Zinaida Meyerhold) but no matter. His pacing and attack in the two outer movements are inspired and very exciting, while the plangent melody of the central *Andante caloroso* is a maturely characterised elegy. I look forward to Bartlett's future recordings with keen anticipation. **Jeremy Nicholas**

'My Paris Years'

Debussy *Arabesque No 1. L'isle joyeuse. Suite bergamasque – No 3, Clair de lune* **Franck** *Prélude, choral et fugue* **Ravel** *Pavane pour une infante défunte. Sonatine* **Satie** *Trois Gymnopédies*

Alain Lefèvre *pf*

Warner Classics © 9029 56894-1 (71' • DDD)



Despite his robust discography, this was my introduction to the work of the French

Canadian pianist Alain Lefèvre. Titled 'My Paris Years', the disc is a compendium of French piano favourites from the mid-1880s through 1905.

Lefèvre might be described as a literalist. His touch is resonant without a great deal of variety and his dynamic spectrum narrow. Careful pedalling allows each piece to emerge in a sort of photographic clarity. The overriding and lasting impressions of Lefèvre's interpretations are their tempos, which uniformly tend towards the moribund.

Lefèvre may be at his best in the Franck *Prelude, Chorale and Fugue*, which achieves a certain melancholy eloquence, though its fugue becomes laboured. In *L'isle joyeuse*, where many have found suggestions of carefree abandon, Lefèvre discerns instead a studied deliberateness. In Ravel's *Sonatine*, phrases are doled out abstemiously and delivered in a near monotone. One is left longing for the sweep of a long line and some hint of defining shape. **Patrick Rucker**

'Oblique Strategies'

JS Bach *Solo Cello Suite No 1*, BWV1007

Dean *Eleven Oblique Strategies*

Henryson *North American Suite – Black Run*

Kodály *Solo Cello Sonata*, Op 8

Andrei Ioniță *vc*

Orchid © ORC100096 (71' • DDD)



With one possible exception, this is a masterstroke in programming from

the Romanian BBC New Generation Artist Andrei Ioniță but his own oblique interpretative strategies might initially be taken as cutting off one's nose to spite one's face. Bach's Cello Suite No 1, which opens, is coarse and breathless under Ioniță's fingers, as if to purposefully make the recorded premiere that follows sound like a breath of fresh air.

Let's not blame it all on the cellist's gruff Bach, as Brett Dean's *Eleven Oblique Strategies* is a real find. It uses simple instructions conceived as creative lubricants by Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt. 'Look at a small object, look at its centre' does exactly that, examining a single note but not confining itself to that note in the process. Ioniță responds to 'Don't be frightened to show your talents' just as, no doubt, the string-playing Dean did before him. The way 'Disconnect from desire' and 'In a very large room, very quietly' lead into one another is touching and satisfying: proof that this is so much more than a set of character pieces.

GRAMOPHONE *Focus*

COMPLETE COUPERIN

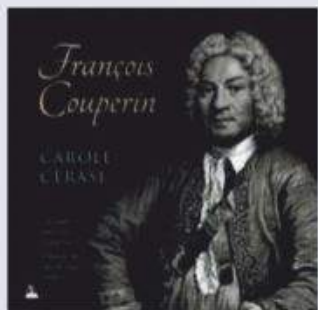
Lindsay Kemp salutes harpsichordist Carole Cerasi, whose landmark Couperin set combines authority with grace

F Couperin

'Complete Works for Harpsichord'

Carole Cerasi *hpd*

Metronome © 10 METCD1100 (11h 12' • DDD)



A recording of the complete harpsichord music of François

Couperin is a major project in any circumstances. But to record all 10 discs' worth in the space of a year and time their release for the 350th anniversary of the composer's birth looks not just like a labour of love but also a real statement of intent, not least because in a recording career that began in 1997 with a *Gramophone* Award-winning set of the complete harpsichord music of

Jacquet de la Guerre, Carole Cerasi has always chosen carefully when and with what to enter the studio. One need not suspect her of throwing this one off, then, and indeed it takes only a few tracks to realise that her affinity with the music runs very deep.

Tidily, she uses a different harpsichord for each of Couperin's publications – the four books of *Pièces de clavecin* (together containing a total of 27 *ordres* or suites) and the eight *préludes* of *L'art de toucher le clavecin* – and gratifyingly each has its own character. Three of them are modern copies: of a 1624 Ruckers offering sweet clarity in *L'art*; of a firm and oboe-y 1738 Vater for the *Second livre*; and of a 1769, slightly flutier Taskin for the *Troisième livre*. The two original instruments, with their more characterful sounds, are the stars, however. The Vater used in the

Quatrième livre is strong but kindly, while in the *Premier livre* the Cobbe Collection's 1636/1763 Ruckers/Hemsch astonishes with its big-hearted shower of sound, ranging from trumpet-like force in 'La Nanète' to mellow depths in 'Les sentiments'.

Cerasi's playing has always been distinguished by its technical control, not just in terms of accuracy but of a crisp and precise touch that brings great lucidity to the texture while leaving the sound of each string clear from clutter and able to sing with pure resonance. With instruments as fine as these, that is a major blessing; you won't hear Cerasi thumping the key-bed. Likewise her command of the music's profuse ornamentation is complete; every trill, mordent and turn is generously formed, whether blossoming like flowers in 'Les vergers fleüris', tumbling loosely like a stream in 'La Zénobie' or frothing like bubbles in 'Menuets croisés', yet they are indisputably a convincing part of the musical discourse.

These are certainly qualities that are needed to realise this music, but the pleasure they give would be limited if they were not linked to a proper feel

GRAMOPHONE *talks to ...*

Carole Cerasi

This is an enormous undertaking.

How long did it take to record 10 discs of Couperin?

I have always loved playing Couperin's harpsichord works. Although I find the idea of 'complete' anything very daunting, I felt that if I didn't record Couperin's works, I would regret it. But because of the magnitude of the project, I put off making a decision until I realised that I had left myself only one year to record the complete works if it stood a chance of coinciding with Couperin's anniversary in 2018. I underestimated the size of the project, imagining it to be about five CDs, whereas it turned out to be 10! By the time we were ready, the only sensible solution was to release it as a box-set, with one booklet, rather than dividing it into four volumes containing one *Livre* each.

There is more variety in this music than one might expect.

Absolutely. Couperin's harpsichord music is a treasure trove of forms, moods, colours, techniques, styles ... all on a very small scale.



The numerous pieces in triple or compound metre, often marked *tendrement*, *affectueusement*, *gracieusement* etc can give a false impression of rather similar, elegant music, whereas Couperin is able with the most subtle shift of phrase-length or melancholy harmony to be immensely moving. The *Livres* also contain some very extroverted, brilliant Italianate movements, as well as more old-fashioned French courtly dances. If anyone doubts the profundity of Couperin, they should listen to 'La Distraite' from the 16th ordre – pure Schumann, with whom I feel Couperin's music has much in common.

What inspired you to choose a different harpsichord for each of Couperin's publications, and how did you choose the specific instruments?

The question of the instrument choice was always going to be complicated. I didn't want to record so much music on only one instrument – not because the music needs changes of colour to validate it but because I wanted to bring out different qualities of sound for my own pleasure. As I have often done before, I was keen to play antique instruments. For practical reasons I couldn't use four different antiques, but the chosen modern copies are by the finest makers working today. I had already recorded Jacquet de La Guerre on the Ruckers-Hemsch harpsichord at Hatchlands Park but to play the instrument by Antoine Vater was a wonderful opportunity: it was probably played by Telemann, who visited the maker's workshop in Paris the year that this harpsichord was built. The instrument was re-restored specifically for this project, which made it a real honour to play. As for matching the instrument to the music, this only really happened with *Livre I*, which I played on the earliest harpsichord. But the fragile state of the Vater harpsichord added a suitably poignant quality to *Livre IV*, written at the end of Couperin's life.

for the music's heart and soul. This may be Cerasi's first recording of French repertoire for over 20 years but she shows here that she is still thoroughly at home in its dance measures, stylistic conventions and cultured sensibility. But what about the veiled and enigmatically allusive quality that has long led people to link Couperin's art with that of Watteau? That's a harder question to answer, as responses will always be personal; the meanings of the titles Couperin gave his character pieces are in any case often either lost in time or were perhaps deliberately ambiguous from the start, and not every one of these 226 miniatures can please everyone. In general, though, Cerasi's interpretations are convincing, perhaps precisely because they are rooted in such a clear understanding of their formal and stylistic background. Nicholas Anderson's booklet note cites the advice of Cerasi's teacher Kenneth Gilbert (a doyen of French style and himself a harpsichordist who has recorded the complete Couperin) that, 'as in all music, the picturesque or programmatic elements should never be allowed to take precedence over the pure musical values inherent in these works', and thus, while there are harpsichordists who might be more outgoing, playful, mannered, tongue-in-cheek, indulgently expressive or whatever in pursuit of attention, Cerasi's preference seems to be to let the music speak primarily on its own terms rather than impose on it too much (potentially misconceived) interpretative weight. That means a piece like 'L'âme-en-peine' could strike some as lacking in tragic feeling; but more often the effect is as in 'Les vieux seigneurs', a piece possibly intended to suggest a comical image of old courtiers dancing but which Cerasi's rendition presents as the touchingly nostalgic sarabande that it certainly also is.

And so things are throughout this wonderful and important collection, a delight to dip into, in which Cerasi lets simplicity, taste and exquisite harpsichord skill articulate the music with grace and intelligence, so that every piece is in itself a pleasure to listen to, and every listener can interpret it as they wish. Is it so hard to imagine Couperin himself taking the same approach? **G**

The simple lessons of Dean's work appear to feed into a remarkable account of Kodály's physically and mentally challenging Sonata for Solo Cello in which Ioniță is absolutely in the zone. The *Allegro maestoso* is played as an incantation and the cellist is as a whirling dervish in the *Allegro molto vivace*. Ioniță has a special way with the low-slung melodies of the *Adagio* and the distinctive sound of his open fifths, vibrating with such fizz, tells of his distinction and charisma as a player. The Kodály asks for everything – *sul ponticello*, plucked glissandos and frenzied arpeggios – but Ioniță's vision distracts from all those things, just as it should. I can see why he wanted to slacken the tension with an encore that takes a different view of the musical vernacular but I'm not sure Svante Henryson's bluegrass pastiche 'Black Run' was the right choice after music of such patience and intensity. **Andrew Mellor**

'Piano Book'

JS Bach Minuet, BWV Anh114. Prelude, BWV846
Bądarzewska-Baranowska The Maiden's Prayer
Beethoven Für Elise, WoO59 **Chopin** Prelude, 'Raindrop', Op 28 No 15 **Clementi** Sonatina, Op 36 No 1 – Andante **Czerny** The School of Velocity, Op 299 – No 1, Presto **Debussy** Children's Corner – Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum. Rêverie. Suite bergamasque – No 3, Clair de lune **Huang** The Merry Shepherd Boy
Mendelssohn Spinning Song, Op 67 No 4
Mozart Piano Sonata No 16, K545 – Allegro. Variations on 'Ah, vous dirai-je, maman', K265
Poulenc Villageoises – No 2, Staccato **M Richter** The Departure **Sakamoto** Merry Christmas, Mr Lawrence **Schubert** Moment musical, D780 No 3 **Tiersen** La valse d'Amélie
Lang Lang *pf*
 DG © 479 7441GH (73) • DDD



After his Swiss watch and perfume ('Essence of my music'), Lang Lang's latest branding

exercise concerns piano education. The Lang Lang Piano Academy was launched in 2014 in partnership with Faber Music, and since then it has produced several publications, including Piano Method books for beginners and children.

This latest product in fact marks his return to recording following an interval of recovery from tendonitis. Presented in a fancy package, it consists of a score and accompanying CD (with plenty of arty vanity photos for the aficionados), containing a collection of 'miniature masterpieces' that supposedly shaped

him as a player and 'created my great passion for piano'. The choice is eclectic: from folk tunes to silly tunes (*Chopsticks*), from 'classic favourites' to film themes, presented in no obvious order in terms of difficulty or style. In these respects it is hard to understand the pedagogical value. In fact not everything included here would be considered all that simple – take Mozart's *Ah, vous dirai-je, maman* Variations, for instance – and perhaps a word of warning should be entered against taking on a piece too hard for the pianistic level of the learner.

Motivation seems to be Lang Lang's principal teaching method – obviously an important complement, but only if some solid technique is being acquired along the way – and accordingly the book contains nothing that could be regarded as pedagogical, unless Lang Lang's personal phrases on top of each piece count: 'This is one of my favourite pieces!'; 'I love this movie [*Amélie*] because it has a fairy-tale feel to the music'. There is also a copy of *Für Elise* with Lang Lang's handwritten comments and recommendations, such as 'Play from your heart'. Some of these he himself could have done with observing in his recording ('Careful with the pedal').

As for the recording, it is reassuring to see that, despite his intervening absence, nothing much has changed in Lang Lang's playing, which is consistently exaggerated and over-pedalled, with generally hard and to my ears (in Elgar's 'Nimrod' or the middle section of Chopin's 'Raindrop' Prelude) occasionally unpleasant sound. If you've missed watching him play, there are video clips for each track, including what could be a rough sketch of one of Nike's ickiest 'Believe in More' adverts, for the Bach C major Prelude (available on the *Gramophone* website) and more recently one for his painfully stretched-out and pedal-inundated *Clair de lune*, filmed on a cruise boat in Paris.

Overall the project takes me back to the scene in *Five Easy Pieces* where Bobby Dupea, a former child prodigy pianist played by Jack Nicholson, having performed Chopin's E minor Prelude, dismisses his deeply moved listener-lover, saying that he simply picked the easiest piece he could think of, and that he had played it better when he was eight: 'I faked a little Chopin. You faked a big response.'

Michelle Assay

Find your
music on
www.qobuz.com

qobuz

Poul Ruders

Now aged 70, this essentially self-taught, undogmatic Danish composer shows no signs of letting up, says **Richard Whitehouse**

The history of Danish music during the post-war era is a distinguished one, with composers such as Vagn Holmboe, Per Nørgård and Hans Abrahamsen all making their mark both at home and abroad. Yet in terms of achieving consistent international acclaim, arguably the most significant figure is Poul Ruders, whose sizeable and wide-ranging output has now been heard across Europe and on both sides of the Atlantic – soloists, ensembles, orchestras and latterly opera companies all have been keen to commission and perform his latest music.

Much of this appeal lies in Ruders's non-dogmatic approach to composition. From the outset of his creativity, in the mid-1960s, he rejected the serial thinking then prevalent in favour of an exploratory and impulsive reaction to what went on around him. This is confirmed by the fact that, while he has incorporated minimalism (more the European variety of Louis Andriessen than the American one of Steve Reich or Philip Glass) and even the English procedure of change ringing into his vocabulary, his mature idiom has never been defined by a single system or aesthetic.

No 5 might appear almost a concession to symphonic convention. Yet, as most often with Ruders, little is what it seems

Chamber and vocal music feature prominently, with two piano sonatas seminal to his output: the first, the *Dante Sonata* (1970), marks the point when a fascination with the abrasiveness of early Krzysztof Penderecki found accord with earlier music, Liszt informing the emotional volatility of its two movements; the Second Sonata (1982) widens its remit to expressionism and minimalism, the formal rigour of its four movements culminating in a finale whose juxtaposition of static chords with their resonant overtones unequivocally sets the seal on this modern masterpiece.

Among Ruders's vocal works should be mentioned *The Bells* (1993), a resourceful and aptly gothic setting of Edgar Allan Poe whose dramatic treatment of the soprano part is comparable to that of solo instruments in his concertos. The latter range from the neo-baroque concision and astringency of the First Violin Concerto (1981), to the intricacy and equivocation of the Viola Concerto (1994, rev 2013), to the abstract music theatre of stark emotional intensity that is *Drama Trilogy* (1987-88) – a series of three *concertante* pieces (respectively for piano, percussion and cello).

From the outset, Ruders has been recognised as an orchestral composer of uncommon range and insight. This was evident in such pieces from his early maturity as the exhilarating take on minimalist conceits *Manhattan Abstraction* (1982) or the sombrely alluring *Thus Saw Saint John* (1984). A latter-day



response to Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, Ruders's *Concerto in Pieces* (1994-95) proved a hit at the 1996 Last Night of the Proms, its quixotic and always engaging humour later pursued in such large-scale works as the comedically ironic *Handel Variations* (2009).

The subtitle of Ruders's First Symphony (1989), *Himmelhoch jauchzend – zum Tode betrübt*, is reflected in the gripping stylistic interplay of its four movements, whose 'rejoicing' to 'death' trajectory unfolds from wanton jubilation to funereal absorption. The Second Symphony (*Symphony and Transformation*, 1996) is no less impressive, unfolding as a single movement where metamorphosis is pursued as continuous motivic variation and as incremental change in timbre and texture in what is Ruders's most ingenious formal design.

The Third Symphony (2005-06, rev 2009), whose *Dream Catcher* subtitle is drawn from a Native American spiritual device, contrasts stasis and dynamism through an initial surge of activity that re-emerges near the end of the first movement, then towards the close of the second as it subsides into restive calm and tense recollection. In Symphony No 4 (*An Organ Symphony*, 2008-09), the organ is integrated into the orchestral fabric, with any virtuosity residing in the detail rather than the gesture – not least in the final Chaconne, as it builds to an energetic peroration and offhand closing flourish.

With its absence of subtitle and overall format of three (fast-slow-fast) movements, the Fifth Symphony (2013) might appear almost a concession to symphonic convention. Yet, as most often with Ruders, little is what it seems: witness the first movement's initial fanfares which persist right through the texture while the music runs itself into the ground; the disembodied aura of the central *Tranquillo sognante* with its skewed modal harmonies; then a finale whose bracing impetus brings no real affirmation but rather the 'chasing of its tail' to an unresolved close.



Outside these designated symphonies, Ruders's most significant orchestral works are his two imposing trilogies. In its more than hour-long duration and lavish

orchestration, the *Solar Trilogy* (1992-95) epitomises its composer's panache – the sun's majestic course duly evoked through the rhythmic insistence of *Gong*, the ethereal accumulation of *Zenith* then the seismic apotheosis that is *Corona*. Yet the more understated set known as *The Nightshade Trilogy* leaves a more lasting impression: the ambiguous connotations of the composite word 'nightshade' are explored as the sequence takes in the deftness of the first piece, *Nightshade* (1987), the darkness-to-light progression of *The Second Nightshade* (1991) and the seamless luminosity of *Final Nightshade* (2003) – an increase in forces from piece to piece paralleled by the widening expressive scope of the trilogy's long-range conception.

It is with the domain of opera that Ruders has been at his most provocative. His chamber piece *Tycho* (1986) made little headway, but in *The Handmaid's Tale* (1996-98) he came up with a dramatic 'end-of-century' experience with its basis in Margaret Atwood's bleak dystopian novel. Trying to convey the anguish of women at the hands of a chauvinist Christian fundamentalism arguably led Ruders into an unduly two-dimensional portrayal of his protagonists – though given the impact of the recent TV adaptation of the novel, the opera's revival might take on renewed relevance. As, moreover, might that of *Kafka's Trial* (2001-03), in which Franz Kafka's totemic novel is rendered from the perspective of its author's real-life struggle with an unwanted engagement which is finally wrecked by his denunciation and humiliation at the hands of his fiancée and her confidant. Once again, theatrical immediacy is not

RUDERS FACTS

1949 Born Ringsted, Denmark, March 27

c1965-70 Trains as organist and studies orchestration with Karl Aage Rasmussen, though essentially self-taught as a composer

1980 *Four Compositions* for chamber ensemble marks start of compositional maturity

1985 *Manhattan Abstraction* premiere, Danish RSO, Copenhagen, February 7

1996 *Concerto in Pieces* premiere at Last Night of the Proms, London, September 14

2000 *The Handmaid's Tale* premiere, Royal Danish Opera, Copenhagen, March 6

2002 *Listening Earth* (2001) premiere, Berlin Philharmonic, Berlin, November 29

2004 *Final Nightshade* premiere, New York Philharmonic, New York, June 10

2005 *Kafka's Trial* premiere, Royal Danish Opera, March 12

2010 *Selma Jezková* premiere, Royal Danish Opera, Copenhagen, September 5

2011 *Symphony No 4* premiere, Dallas SO, January 20

2019 *The Thirteenth Child* premiere, Santa Fe Opera, July 27

always to the advantage of a score whose abundant irony rather precludes a corresponding pathos or empathy in respect of the main characters, but a new production could well galvanise any such latent qualities within Ruders's music.

Selma Jezková (2006-07) might seem a reduction in all senses, Ruders having compressed Lars von Trier's screenplay for *Dancer in the Dark* (2000) down to its essentials. Yet such compression arguably works to the advantage of the main protagonist, such that her predicament becomes the more acute and her character thereby more empathetic. Musically, the free tonality provides an expressive focus, without the schematic framework ever becoming inflexible. The orchestration helps to open out the drama, so that more is conveyed by inference than by statement. Less successful, perhaps, are the 'songs' through which Selma expresses her inner emotions, whose populist overtones can risk contrivance (Björk's own contribution to the film, released as 'Selmasongs', makes for an instructive comparison), but this is a relative failing next to the veracity of the opera overall.

Further orchestral and chamber commissions are in the pipeline. But before these, a fifth opera, *The Thirteenth Child* (2016), drawing on a story by the Brothers Grimm and with its libretto by long-term associates Becky and David Starobin (Ruders has collaborated with the latter on numerous pieces for guitar; and the Starobins' Bridge Records label has issued more than a dozen albums of Ruders's compositions and will release his latest opera later this year), receives its world premiere at Santa Fe Opera this July. Whatever else, it will doubtless reaffirm that, with Ruders having now entered his eighth decade, one can continue to expect the unexpected. **G**

SELECTED RECORDINGS OF RUDERS

Showcasing the indefinability of his wide-ranging output



'Piano Works'

Rolf Hind *pf*

Dacapo (11/01)

The two piano sonatas are among the most important of his earlier works in setting out the formal and expressive qualities that have evolved over the intervening decades into the singular idiom of today.



Selma Jezková

Sols; Royal Danish Opera / Michael Schønwandt

Dacapo

Ruders may have been tempting providence by basing this opera on Lars von Trier's film, but the outcome impresses in its formal economy and emotional veracity.

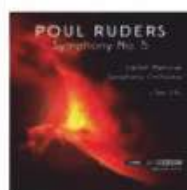
Ylva Kihlberg and Palle Knudsen are charismatic in the main roles.



Nightshade Trilogy

Capricorn / Oliver Knussen; Odense SO / Paul Mann, Scott Yoo
Bridge (1/15)

Arguably the most intriguing of Ruders's numerous trilogies, this evolved over a period of 17 years, while remaining consistent as to its underlying musical trajectory in what is a perfect instance of 'unity within diversity'.



Symphony No 5

Danish National SO / Olari Elts

Bridge (3/17)

Ruders's symphonic cycle has been as absorbing as it is unpredictable, with the Fifth Symphony a gripping continuation in its distinctive play on classical formal archetypes and vivid confirmation of the symphony's ongoing relevance.

Vocal



Hugo Shirley enjoys Christian Thielemann's Verdi Requiem:

All four soloists come together for one of the most touching versions of the "Lacrimosa" I've heard in a while' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 87**



Tim Ashley explores reason in madness with Carolyn Sampson:

'Sampson's silvery tone suggests fragility from the outset, and she admirably conveys the vagaries of desire, distress and confusion' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 90**

JS Bach

St Mark Passion, BWV247

(reconstr Grychtolik/Savall)

David Szigetvári *ten* Evangelist Konstantin Wolff

bass Christus Marta Mathéu *sop* Raffaele Pé

counterten Reinoud Van Mechelen *ten*

La Capella Reial de Catalunya; Le Concert des Nations / Jordi Savall

Alia Vox (F) (two discs for the price of one)

AVSA9931 (111' • DDD/DSD • T/t)

Recorded live at the Chapelle Royale, Château de Versailles, March 26, 2018

JS Bach

St Mark Passion, BWV247 (reconstr Fischer)

Matthias Bleidorn *ten* Evangelist Richard Logiewa

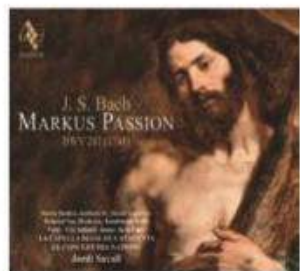
bar Christus Katherina Müller *sop* Jan Börner

counterten Manfred Bittner *bass* Cantorey

St Catharinen; Bell'arte Salzburg / Andreas Fischer

Dabringhaus und Grimm (F) (2)

MDG902 2104-6 (131' • DDD/DSD • T)



There are two printed sources of the *St Mark Passion* libretto but its music is completely lost. Since the 1870s successive generations of scholars have speculated that Bach probably parodied five numbers from the *Trauer-Ode* (Cantata No 198) and an aria from a Weimar-period alto cantata (No 54). A reconstruction by Alexander Grychtolik (published by Edition Peters) is the basis for Jordi Savall's tweaked revision. Alia Vox's lavish booklet includes a detailed summary of sources and adaptations for every number (its complex organisation takes a while to disentangle), glossy illustrations of printed sources of the libretto and photos of rehearsals in the Chapelle Royale at Versailles – where this live recording was made in March 2018.

The choir of 25 (including children on the upper parts) and Le Concert des Nations produce a vivid performance in which emotional directness is paramount. David Szigetvári is a capable Evangelist,

although Konstantin Wolff's gritty Christus is closer to a roaring Wotan than the compassionate redeemer of the world. Raffaele Pé has a few momentary fragilities but his full-bodied 'Falsche Welt, dein schmeichelnd Küssen' (adjusted from Cantata No 54) is characterised as a bitterly indignant response to Judas's kiss, its five-part strings played with cut and thrust. The waspishly driven strings in 'Ich lasse dich, mein Jesus, nicht' (from Cantata No 2) force Reinoud Van Mechelen to push uncomfortably; his expressive abilities are better served in 'Mein Tröster ist nicht mehr bei mir' (No 198), shaped beautifully by two flautists in pensive dialogue with oboe, viols and pizzicato bass. Marta Mathéu's crisp dialogue with Manfredo Kraemer's obbligato violin in 'Angenehmes Mordgeschrei!' is delightful – although Savall's choice of cheerful quick music that Bach used in two guises to celebrate the name day of a university professor (Cantata No 205) or New Year's Day (No 171) seems like an incongruous response to the mob baying for Christ's crucifixion. On the other hand, Savall's idea to follow Christ's death with a turbulent aria for tenor, jagged basso continuo, plaintive flute and soprano chorale melody altered from the 1725 version of the *St John Passion* is an aptly anguished response that also anticipates the rending of the temple.

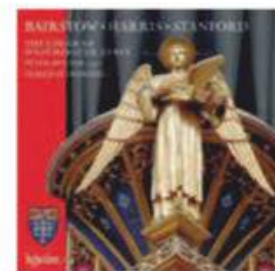
Andreas Fischer, the Kantor of the Catharinenkirche in Hamburg (where the teenage Bach heard Reinken play the organ), also selects suitable parody models for his own reconstruction. The booklet offers no transparency about his decisions, which are often significantly different from Grychtolik/Savall; those seeking scholarly satisfaction are directed to read the preface to his edition published by Ortus (2016). The Cantorey St Catharinen, a well-drilled group of about 30 adult singers, convey solemn catharsis in the opening chorus, interweaving deftly with the instrumentalists of Bell'arte Salzburg. Matthias Bleidorn is a serene Evangelist, although he struggles in his arias. Richard Logiewa's Christus balances authority and

compassion. Katherina Müller's ardent 'Er kommt, er ist vorhanden' benefits from subtly articulate strings. Jan Börner's gentle 'Mein Heiland, dich vergess ich nicht' is sweetly poetic (the concertante violas da gamba played with hushed sensitivity); the polyphonic five-part strings and vocal melody in 'Falsche Welt' are judged with mellifluous sympathy. Fischer's choices of slow pathos for 'Ich lasse dich, mein Jesus, nicht' (Manfred Bittner's bass voice in consoling dialogue with an oboe da caccia, supported by viols) and a solemn contrapuntal tenor aria with a pair of oboes d'amore for 'Angenehmes Mordgeschrei!' are persuasive solutions for their contexts. The absence of an English translation of the libretto is another regrettable deficiency but Fischer's performance speaks eloquently for itself. **David Vickers**

Bairstow • Harris • Stanford

Bairstow Blessed city, heavenly Salem. The Lamentation. Let all mortal flesh keep silence
Harris Bring us, O Lord God. Faire is the heaven. Flourish for an Occasion. Strengthen ye the weak hands
Stanford Evening Service, Op 12. Festal Communion Service, Op 128 – Gloria in excelsis. For lo, I raise up, Op 145. O for a closer walk with God, Op 113 No 6b. A Song of Wisdom, Op 113 No 6a

The Choir of Westminster Abbey / James O'Donnell with **Peter Holder** *org*
Hyperion (F) CDA68259 (76' • DDD • T)



Hyperion's series 'The Westminster Abbey Collection' continues with

another superb disc of music composed between 1906 and 1959 by one giant of the English choral tradition, Charles Villiers Stanford, and two of his younger, talented contemporaries.

In 1928 the 54-year-old Edward Bairstow famously turned down an offer to move to Westminster Abbey, explaining that he felt he was more useful at York



Emotionally charged: The Choir of Westminster Abbey excel in the music of Stanford, Bairstow and Harris

Minster, despite the fact (or perhaps because) he had worked at the Abbey as a youthful assistant organist. All three of his works on this disc are masterpieces. The compelling unaccompanied *Let all mortal flesh* is taken with a good, steady stride, while *The Lamentation* (of 1942) proves how good Bairstow was at creating stillness. *Blessed City* – an anthem without equal – receives a gutsy rendition, with some gloriously colourful organ-playing by Peter Holder and, in the final stanza, a treble soloist, Ruihan Bao-Smith, whose slight hint of fragility adds another frisson of beauty.

The trebles have their own big, special moment in Stanford's *A Song of Wisdom*, which continues with nary a break into the lovely *O for a closer walk with God*. The revelation for me was Stanford's powerful response to the unfolding carnage of the Great War, his 1915 anthem *For lo, I raise up*. Beneath the superficial swagger lies one of his most inspired works. The choral singing here is breathtakingly good.

William Harris's idiom is more straitlaced. Worthy, yes, but not as memorable or as emotionally charged as Bairstow or Stanford. However, there is much to relish in his setting of John Donne's *Bring us, O Lord God* and the

oft-sung *a cappella Faire is the heaven* (1925) is beautifully shaped and recorded with a slightly softer focus.

The notoriously noisy purlieu of the Abbey does not intrude and the organ sounds in fine fettle. The expert craftsmanship of these three composers has been truly well served by James O'Donnell and his wonderful musicians.

Malcolm Riley

Berlioz

Roméo et Juliette, Op 17^a. Béatrice et Bénédict – Overture. Overture 'Le roi Lear'

^aMarion LeBègue *mez* ^aJulien Behr *ten* ^aFrédéric Caton *bass* ^aSpirito; Lyon National Orchestra / Leonard Slatkin

Naxos ® ② 8 573449/50 (119' • DDD • T/t)



Two previous releases in this occasional Lyon Berlioz cycle – the *Symphonie fantastique* (10/12) and *Harold en Italie* (A/14) – were received with only moderate rapture in the pages of *Gramophone*. Yet this latest release (presumably held over from its 2014 recording date to coincide with the

composer's recent anniversary) seems a stronger offering altogether. Working as before with the orchestra of which he was then music director, Slatkin displays again his characteristic commitment and an ability to sound at home in the repertoire – and with the musicians – of other cultures. His Berlioz in France follows on from his adoption of Vaughan Williams (and other British composers) in the UK.

Several of this 'dramatic symphony's' previous interpreters have shown awareness of the score's place in musical history, its importance to Wagner, its continuing from Beethoven, and so on. Slatkin parks all this history to one side in favour of a direct, unpretentious yet always dramatic reading, a *Roméo* without intellectual frills, as it were. His 'dramatic' is not as knowing as Colin Davis's – the colouring of whose four recordings displays much knowledge of the play's ironic twists – or Pierre Boulez's, who sounds as if he is conducting the key central 'Scène d'amour' with Wagner looking over his shoulder. And, although we know that Slatkin has a general interest in earlier versions, he does not mine lost cuts and alternatives out of the archives as did Gardiner. This is *Roméo* straight and as is.



LOVE
MUSIC
HELP
MUSICIANS^{UK}

**Thanks to Help Musicians UK
I could afford to study to
become an opera singer.**

Our work gives people like
Soraya a chance to follow their
dreams.

To find out more or to donate,
visit **helpmusicians.org.uk**
or call **020 7239 9100**.

Slatkin works his orchestra hard but it is not yet the equal of Davis's LSO or Vienna Philharmonic or Gardiner's Revolutionary Romantics (Philips, 3/98). Enthusiasm, in a most live-sounding recording, often takes priority over sheer needlepoint ensemble. Slatkin's Père Laurence has a good voice but his text is not the clearest – it's hard not to miss the Shakespearean popular humanity of Gardiner's Gilles Cachemaille, even if he is not the 'noble orator' Berlioz once called for. The choir is good – smaller than we sometimes hear but bright, forward, clear and (on those crucial vowel sounds) above all French.

Amid today's anarchic pricing of the classical catalogues Naxos can no longer guarantee a bargain basement slot. But this certainly reasonably priced edition is worth serious consideration against the big names, especially if you are not over-concerned about the work's intellectual subtext. And it's good to catch up again with two further Berlioz Shakespeare works, especially the rarer *Le roi Lear*, a potent but sad reminder of the operas that weren't to be. **Mike Ashman**

Byrd

The Great Service. Exalt thyself, O God. Fantasia, BK62. O God, the proud are risen against me. Sing joyfully
Odyssean Ensemble / Colm Carey with **Christian Wilson** *org*
Linn © CKD608 (59' • DDD • T)



Given the renown that *The Great Service* has enjoyed more or less from

the off, introductions are superfluous. There's nothing churchy about the Byrd offered here by the Odyssean Ensemble; their gutsy approach reminds me of Ensemble Plus Ultra's selection from the *Gradualia*, the Propers for Saints Peter and Paul in particular. The acoustic (relatively dry but sumptuous) and performing forces (10 singers and a chamber organ) encourage comparison. Yet the diminuendo at the end of *O God, the proud are risen against me* reveals a core of tranquillity, incidentally confirming the quality of the sound recording. A bonus is the extended Fantasia, BK62, which matches *The Great Service* for ambition and invention (the organ, a modern copy made to Tudor specifications, is well worth hearing).

The question of the organ brings me to the decision (reported on in Andrew Johnson's excellent notes) to follow literally the prescription of contemporary

manuscripts, which notate only the outer voices. While performers often treat this as a form of shorthand (think of Lully's reported habit of composing only the outer parts, leaving the others to be filled in by assistants), Christian Wilson does just what the scores indicate, albeit doubling the bass at the octave. The result, Johnson suggests, speaks for itself, and I must say I agree: it imparts richness but without heaviness and allows those inner voices to be heard perfectly clearly. Last, the cover illustration, showing members of the Chapel Royal at Elizabeth's funeral in 1603, is beautifully reproduced. Everything here is stylish and very rewarding. **Fabrice Fitch**

Chausson

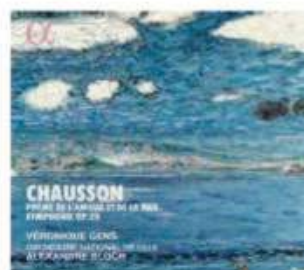
Poème de l'amour et de la mer, Op 19^a.

Symphony, Op 20

aVéronique Gens *sop*

Lille National Orchestra / Alexandre Bloch

Alpha © ALPHA441 (60' • DDD • T/t)



A work that tends to bring out the best in the singers who have tackled it,

Poème de l'amour et de la mer has always fared well on disc. Distinguished exponents include Victoria de los Ángeles, Janet Baker, Montserrat Caballé and Susan Graham, among others, and Véronique Gens now adds her name to the list with a performance that ranks, unquestionably, among the finest to date. Superbly sung, and wonderfully well conducted and played by Alexandre Bloch and his Lille orchestra, this is an interpretation of great beauty and insight.

Gens's dark tone and her ability to fuse sound with sense allow her both to encompass the work's rapturous lyricism and to map out the psychological subtlety of its depiction of the painful end of an affair, viewed against the backdrop of the immutable cycles of nature. Every word of Maurice Buchar's rather ornate text is given clarity and meaning without fracturing the vocal line. The oscillating emotions, as hope gives way first to anxiety, then to despair, are more searchingly conveyed here than in any other version I know, while the closing 'Le temps des lilas' brings with it both a deep, contained sadness and a disquieting air of irrevocable finality. Keenly alert both to the complexities of orchestral detail and to the inner propulsion of the score, Bloch is with her every step of the way. He carefully stresses the work's pivotal nature, gazing back

towards Wagner yet pre-empting *La mer*, and also reminds us of the often startling originality of its form, part dramatic monologue, part song-cycle, though in some respects it remains unclassifiable.

Its companion piece is the Symphony in B flat, much criticised for its overt debt to Wagner, particularly its slow movement, which is closely modelled on the Act 3 *Tristan* Prelude. The greater and more subtle influence here, however, derives from Franckian cyclic form, which dictates the meticulously crafted structure, and the musical argument is laid out with perfect clarity in Bloch's performance without losing sight of the work's direct intensity of emotional expression or the headiness of Chausson's orchestration. The playing is rich, both in sound and detail, the brass warm and burnished, the woodwind elegant and refined, while the recording, like that of *Poème*, is both spacious and exactly balanced. It's an outstanding disc, and highly recommended. **Tim Ashley**

Debussy • Fauré • Poulenc

Debussy Trois Chansons de Charles d'Orléans

Fauré Requiem, Op 48 (1893 version)

Poulenc Figure humaine

Roxane Chalard *sop* **Mathieu Dubroca** *bar*

Louis-Noël Bestion de Camboulas *org*

Ensemble Aedes; Les Siècles / Mathieu Romano

Aparté © AP201 (59' • DDD • T/t)



Founded 10 years ago by the conductor Mathieu Romano, Ensemble Aedes –

formerly Ensemble Vocal Aedes – have made distinguished contributions to a number of major recordings of late, most notably, perhaps, Jérémie Rhorer's continuing cycle of Mozart's operas with Le Cercle de l'Harmonie and François-Xavier Roth's *Daphnis et Chloé* (Harmonia Mundi, 6/17) with Les Siècles. Here, however, they take centre stage in performances of Fauré's Requiem and *a cappella* works by Poulenc and Debussy for a disc that has an air of a manifesto about it. 'It shows who we are', Romano writes in a booklet note, and it is indeed unquestionably strong.

Romano uses Jean-Michel Nectoux's edition of the 1893 score for the Fauré, which reunites his choir with Les Siècles in an interpretation that is often uncompromisingly stark. His aim, he tells us, is to explore the Requiem's 'dramatic component' and the 'existential angst' that informs it, and anyone who sees the work as primarily consolatory is likely to be

brought up sharp by the opening, where Les Siècles' brass and strings sound severe to the point of austerity, and the first choral entries have a lofty, hieratic quality that immediately takes us into a sombre world of formal ritual.

Later on there are real throbs of fear, first at 'Christe eleison', then in the 'Dies illa' section of the *Libera me*. The coolly radiant *Sanctus* and *Pie Jesu* offer the first intimations of hope but genuine serenity is only reached with the breathtaking final release into the *In Paradisum*. Using French pronunciation of Fauré's own day rather than standardised Latin, Ensemble Aedes sing with admirable refinement. The tenors and altos sound particularly good at the start of the *Offertory*, and soprano lines hover and float with great poise and ease. The soloists, both fine, are drawn from the choir and placed a bit too far forwards in a recording that is otherwise scrupulously balanced.

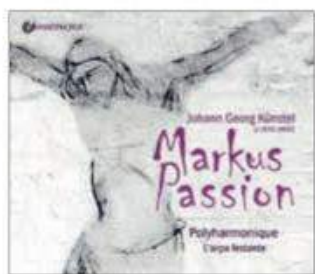
Ensemble Aedes are terrific, meanwhile, in *Figure humaine*, Poulenc's great Resistance work, written undercover in 1943 to privately circulated texts by Paul Éluard. The recording itself, made in a different venue from the Fauré, is on the reverberant side, occasionally losing some detail in the bass. But the performance has such fierce intensity and exactitude that you cannot help but be drawn into it, and the final blazing cry of 'Liberté' has a tremendous impact.

For the *Trois Chansons de Charles d'Orléans*, meanwhile, Romano gives us an edition of his own based on Debussy's manuscripts, which uses the original 1898 version of the first and last songs rather than the 1908 revision when the central 'Quand j'ai ouy le tabourin' was added. They're meticulously done but feel anticlimactic after the Poulenc, and the disc actually works best if you programme it so that the Debussy comes immediately after the Requiem. **Tim Ashley**

Künstel

St Mark Passion

Hans Jörg Mammel *ten* Evangelist **Felix Rumpf** *bar* Christus **Magdalene Harer, Joowon Chung** *sops* **Alexander Schneider, Piotr Olech** *countertens* **Torsten Voigt, Philipp J Kaven, Cornelius Uhle** *bars* **Polyharmonique; L'Arpa Festante** Christophorus © (two discs for the price of one) CHR77435 (138' • DDD • T)



The Franconian organist Johann Georg Künstel (c1645-1695)

worked as a schoolteacher in Ansbach and later became court organist and then Kapellmeister in Coburg. The three parts of his *St Mark Passion* were divided across church services on Maundy Thursday (morning and afternoon) and Good Friday – a tradition that continued in Coburg for some years after the composer's death.

Plangent choruses and dulcet chorales benefit from Polyharmonique's sophisticated harmonic shaping and crystalline diction – particularly in Jacobus Handl Gallus's funerary motet *Ecce quomodo moritur justus*, incorporated midway through the last part of the Good Friday music. Numerous brief arias, duets or other ensembles are sung with stylistic acumen and fluency. The 11 solicitous singers are experts, including tenor Hans Jörg Mammel (an impeccable Evangelist), bass Felix Rumpf (a serene Jesus), countertenor Alexander Schneider and soprano Magdalene Harer – all alumni of groups such as Cantus Cölln, Collegium Vocale Gent, Hans-Christoph Rademann's Schütz project and so on. L'Arpa Festante's single strings, archlute and organ provide expressive accompaniments and fleeting five-part ritornellos that connect succinct elements together.

From the evidence offered by this masterful performance, the solemn Italian-infused Lutheran style of Künstel's music brings to mind Buxtehude – with a little less memorable genius for profound impact, although there are occasionally moments of dramatic energy, such as the contrapuntal tension of the crowd shouting 'Kreuzige ihn!', and several of the concise melodious duets are endearing (especially the soprano duet 'Schlaf wohl', sung after the burial). The intrepid Christophorus label deserves plaudits for yet another musically accomplished foray into the remoter byways of 17th-century German sacred music, although the lack of an English translation of the libretto suggests that not much interest outside Germany is anticipated. **David Vickers**

Liszt

Via Crucis, S53. Ave verum corpus, S44^a.

Salve regina, S66. Vater unser, S29^a

Collegium Vocale Gent / Reinbert de Leeuw *pf* with

^a**Marnix De Cat** *org*

Alpha © ALPHA390 (50' • DDD • T/t)



Reinbert de Leeuw last recorded Liszt's pious *Via Crucis* in 1986 with the

Netherlands Chamber Choir (Philips, 5/86), and if anything the 30-year interval has only deepened his affinity with the inherent spirituality of this music. His new recording with Collegium Vocale Gent is, if anything, more introspective as it reflects on the pain and anguish revealed in the 14 Stations of the Cross. De Leeuw's journey to the Cross moves with almost excruciating slowness, underlining the agonies encapsulated in Liszt's response to these texts drawn up for him by his companion, Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein.

Via Crucis was very much Liszt's personal expression of religious faith, juxtaposing the relative comfort of plainchant and Bach chorales with a harmonic vocabulary which stretched tonality to its very limits. Utterly convincing as I find the organ version, especially in the Corydon Singers' recording with Thomas Trotter at the organ of St Alban's, Holborn (Hyperion, 1/01), de Leeuw reveals through his own vividly focused piano-playing that the version with solo piano accompaniment has a devotional appeal all of its own – perhaps best revealed in the lengthy prelude to the first Station, 'Jesus is Condemned to Death'. Throughout, de Leeuw maintains an almost transcendental poise as, from the piano, he steers the performance through an often stark and desolate musical landscape.

With just 16 voices – four to each part – Collegium Vocale Gent perfectly match the intimacy of de Leeuw's approach. That intimacy is perhaps best revealed in the final Station, 'Jesus is Placed in the Tomb', when, after a desolate one-line melody from the piano, a single voice intones the *Vexilla regis* plainchant, the other voices adding harmonic breadth but never undermining the deep sense of solitary resignation.

Three short sacred choral pieces complete the disc. The first, a simple but highly affecting *a cappella* setting of *Salve regina*, is made all the more enchanting here by de Leeuw's highly effective dynamic shading and the singers' beautifully sustained vocal lines. Marnix De Cat provides the organ accompaniments to both *Vater unser* and *Ave verum corpus* but the organ seems largely superfluous, so well balanced and precise is the choral singing in the former, and so effortlessly the singers pass across the labyrinthine chromaticisms of the latter. **Marc Rochester**



Poise and intimacy: Reinbert de Leeuw directs the Collegium Vocale Gent in the piano-accompanied version of Liszt's *Via Crucis*

Mahler

Das Lied von der Erde

Anna Larsson *contr* Stuart Skelton *ten*

Düsseldorf Symphony Orchestra / Adám Fischer

AVI-Music © AVI8553407 (62' • DDD)



Adám Fischer's fascinating (if slightly eccentric) booklet notes speak of the

words of *Das Lied von der Erde* being almost incidental to the mood, of the music being significantly more important than the texts that inspired it. If the voice is fighting the orchestra, he says (one thinks primarily of the first song and the youthful riders section of the third), then that is Mahler's intention. Tell that to the singers, I think to myself. But he does acknowledge, rightly, that orchestras are more powerful beasts than they were in Mahler's day and that choosing singers for live performance is perhaps more exacting than it was.

All of this may account for the more 'integrated' vocal and orchestral sound here and certainly accounts for the omission of texts – a decidedly odd decision, despite Fischer's claims, and one which certainly won't go down well with buyers. Whatever

the 'mood' at any single point in this piece, it is the words which pinpoint the specifics of particular moments, of particular imagery, and which are vital to a full appreciation of the piece for non-German speakers, no matter how well you know it.

There is no question that the impression of a lyric symphony with obligato voices is what Fischer is striving for and notably achieves here. There is a transparency throughout and all the 'vocal' soloists within the orchestra – not least the wonderfully atmospheric oboe and flute soloists in 'Der Abschied' – shine brightly.

That said, the excellent Stuart Skelton has his work cut out in the recording balance just as he would in the concert hall – his 'heroics' in 'Das Trinklied von Jammer der Erde' are the more intense for that sense of the euphoric and the elemental in the nightmarish imagery. A lighter touch might have been encouraged here and there in subsequent songs but the spirit is certainly writ large.

Anna Larsson was clearly chosen for her autumnal contralto colour. It's a voice that has always sat well with Mahler's earth mothers and it blends strikingly with the *Das Lied* scoring as a colour. The fading beauty is inherent in the sound. But there is a wooliness in the vibrato (call it a lack

of focus) which can compromise intonation and make words indistinct. Perhaps Fischer would say that this doesn't really matter – but it does to me.

Larsson sounds more comfortable with 'Der Abschied' and there is a sense of emotional engagement here that I find missing elsewhere. Again there is atmosphere in the sound and she certainly conveys that sense of 'solitary' in the text. As the music turns towards eternity, Fischer grows lost in the abandonment of a regular metre and his exemplary Düsseldorf orchestra find poetry in every distilled morsel of sound. It can be awesome, too – like the fathomless shudder of string basses which sets in motion the long funereal interlude at the heart of the movement.

I always gauge the depth and insight of a *Das Lied* performance from the line 'Ich such Ruhe für mein einsam Herz' ('I seek peace for my lonely heart'), which Mahler echoes so heartbreakingly in the solo clarinet. Larsson and Fischer do not disappoint – but there is nothing here to pull me away from the incandescent Fischer-Dieskau/King/VPO/Bernstein recording (Decca, 2/67) or, if you must have a contralto, the classic Ferrier/Walter account (Decca, 10/52).

Edward Seckerson

Pergolesi

Stabat mater, interspersed with
Neapolitan traditional polyphony
and instrumental tarantellas

Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu /
Franck-Emmanuel Comte *org*

ICSM © ICSM012 (64' • DDD • T/t)

Recorded live at the Church of Chazelles-sur-Lyon,
July 6, 2015



By now, one could
assemble a pretty
little discography
of well-known works

(from Allegri's *Miserere* to Stravinsky's Mass) presented in unusual contexts. Here then is a 'Neapolitan' *Stabat mater* from a version transmitted in a manuscript from mid-18th-century Lyon, where it was performed with the solo alto part transposed for a baritone and the distribution of a few other sections rearranged (the choral fugues are for five voices). So far, so unusual – but where does Naples come into it, I hear you ask. Franck-Emmanuel Comte's booklet notes provide the answer: the movements of Pergolesi's best-known work are interleaved with musical 'scenes' recalling his experiences of the metropolis and surrounding area during the Holy Week processions, where ornamented plainchant rubs shoulders with tarantellas and decidedly secular-sounding laments, grief and mourning at times indistinguishable from exhilaration.

Are there more polished readings to be had of the Pergolesi? This particular baritone doesn't always convince; and after a moving penultimate duo (at 'Quando corpus') the final 'Amen' falls a bit flat, so I'm sure there are, but that's hardly the point. Attempts at crossover involving medieval and Renaissance repertoires often fail for want of boldness, typically when the connections between juxtaposed materials are overly literal and obvious; here, the affects of different provenance (albeit with multiple points of contact) demonstrate how the thing ought to be done. Pergolesi comes out of it very well but it is the extraneous matter that holds the attention, culminating in a rendition of the opening verses of the *Stabat mater*, in plainchant ornamented according to local custom, of hair-raising intensity.

Fabrice Fitch

Sondheim

Company

2018 London cast

Warner Classics © 9362 49009-7 (67' • DDD)

Sondheim

Follies

2018 National Theatre Cast

Warner Classics © 9362 49009-5 (79' • DDD)



We should celebrate the fact that within the space of a year London has played host to stagings of not one but two Sondheim masterpieces that have all but redefined them in theatrical terms. Dominic Cooke's handsome revival of *Follies* at the National Theatre worked wonders with parallel time lines mingling past and present relationships in ways that clarified and intensified James Goldman's terrific book. Marianne Elliott's revelatory gender-reversed *Company* made even the composer question why he and George Furth had not written it this way in the first place.

Of course, cast albums like these can only remind us of the dramatic context – as realised by Cooke and Elliott – and serve as souvenirs of two great evenings in the theatre. What you hear is not – and can never be – wholly representative of what you have seen (in my case on several occasions). Then again, when Bobbie (yes, with an 'i') enters the mind-bending opening ensemble of *Company* it's a whole new era for the show. He is a she (the marvellous Rosalie Craig) and by virtue of that fact we are already thinking of the show differently – from the perspective of a thirty-something female whose body clock is ticking away. Yes, there's even a dance number called 'Tick tock'.

And, of course, a female Bobbie means gender reversal all round. Girls become boys and boys become girls and numbers like 'You could drive a person crazy' (now the male equivalent of the Andrews Sisters) and 'Have I got a guy for you' shift perspective in amazing ways. One of the great joys of this cast album is the clarity of redefined harmonies in the ensembles, the male/female shifts altering the musical balance in ways that those of us familiar with the exciting (and irreplaceable) Original Broadway Cast album will find fascinating. Of course, Elliott's version is also an update and David Cullen's new orchestrations wrench the score from the twangy guitar and synthesiser-led '70s vibe and shift it to a cooler, mellower place. It loses some of its edge and excitement along the way – especially in the aforementioned dance number

'Tick tock' (which now underscores a narrative sequence featuring 'a multitude of Bobbies') – but it serves the look and feel of Elliott's show completely and underlines just how receptive this and other of Sondheim's masterpieces are to our changing times.

So Jonathan Bailey's frantic Jamie is 'Getting married today' and his panic and demented patter is thrown into even greater relief by the rapture of his soon-to-be-husband Paul (Alex Gaumond). Then there are Bobbie's unsuitable male suitors like the trolley-dolly Andy (Richard Fleeshman), whose ripped body prompts a timely slip of the tongue on his name – Randy – but does nothing to alleviate the boredom emanating from his empty mind. Yes, girl power rules here. And isn't it fascinating how the climactic eulogy 'The ladies who lunch' – delivered with withering deliberation by Patti LuPone's Joanne – is somehow more pungent when addressed to one of 'the girls who just watch'. As I say, that girl Rosalie Craig – picked out in red like a veritable Alice through the looking-glass – is marvellous, super-intense and so moving in the eleven o'clock number 'Being alive'.

And just as *Company* continues to have its finger on the pulse of gender-neutral relationships, so *Follies* at once celebrates the glories of a bygone era while scrutinising the perils of nostalgia. Again there is no substitute for the remastered Original Broadway Cast album – it pretty much changed my life in the early days of discovering musical theatre – but Jonathan Tunick's opulent orchestrations (recreated here with Josh Clayton for a 21-piece band) still invoke the essence of Broadway and Sondheim's score is a cavalcade of numbers reflecting the public and private faces of its characters. The amazing *Follies* sequence where the characters' individual dramas are played out in the context of the show they once so revered is one of the great surprises in musical theatre history. Indeed, the way in which Sondheim distinguishes in his score between the personal numbers and the *Follies* numbers – elevating pastiche to the point at which you would swear that these are in fact classic songs you have known all your life – is alone testament to his genius.

Like all great productions, this one has adapted to the changes in casting since this, its first outing – but Janie Dee's pitch-perfect Phyllis has been with the show all along and remains pretty definitive, not least in the way she nails every caustic one-liner in James

Goldman's book. Imelda Staunton as Sally is more controversial, to my mind shifting the dynamics at the heart of the show with her explosive nervous energy. The close scrutiny of the recording is not kind to her singing, removed as it is from the context of her performance. I'm afraid the quiet, more inward moments of her two great numbers – 'In Buddy's eyes' and 'Losing my mind' – require the ability to 'spin' sound in the upper register and sadly that just isn't in her gift. 'Losing my mind' is, of course, a nervous breakdown disguised as a torch song and there's no question that Staunton's acting abilities make the climax pretty harrowing.

The men – Philip Quast's Ben and Peter Forbes's Buddy – are marvellous, the former so exciting vocally and startling in his eventual breakdown, the latter brilliant in the ultimate sad clown song 'Buddy's Blues'. Likewise the ultimate Lehár pastiche 'One more kiss', which the great Josephine Barstow imbues with so much pathos.

And there is Tracie Bennett's Carlotta with the number 'I'm still here', which is the apogee of Sondheim's great gifts as a lyricist fast-forwarding through decades of American social history. That's not a song; that's an entire era.

Edward Seckerson

R Strauss · Wagner

R Strauss Ariadne auf Naxos – Es gibt ein Reich. Vier letzte Lieder. Vier Lieder, Op 27. Malven (orch Rihm). Wiegenlied, Op 41 No 1 **Wagner** Tannhäuser – Allmächtige Jungfrau; Dich, teure Halle

Lise Davidsen sop

Philharmonia Orchestra / Esa-Pekka Salonen
Decca © 483 4883DH (61' • DDD • T/t)



It's been a long time since a singer has generated as much buzz as the Norwegian

soprano Lise Davidsen, *Gramophone's* current Young Artist of the Year, and her debut album for Decca was always going to be an event. She opts for Strauss and Wagner: no surprise given recent and current engagements, even if eyebrows might well be raised that a 32-year-old soprano should have chosen to record the *Four Last Songs* for her debut recital.

But Davidsen is no ordinary singer. Throughout the whole album one marvels at the voice, its easy grandeur and sheer size, its steely focus and security – all well captured by Decca's engineers. The timbre has a default cool beauty but she can flood

it with warmth to fill out a phrase magnificently. These gifts are matched by the maturity, honesty and integrity of Davidsen's approach.

The operatic extracts make an impressive opener – confident and superbly sung. But she's even better in the earlier Strauss songs, where we get a real sense of tension in a terrific 'Ruhe, meine Seele!' and plenty of *Schwung* in 'Cäcilie' and 'Heimliche Aufforderung'. 'Morgen' is a marvel of calm contemplation, showing (as does a melting 'Wiegenlied') how beautifully Davidsen can pare her voice down when necessary. She seems a little less sure, though, how to deal with Strauss's actual last song, the slight 'Malven' – not helped by being heard in its orchestral guise.

And the *Four Last Songs* themselves? Davidsen's vocal riches and interpretative honesty are deeply rewarding, her majestic soprano harking perhaps most to the work's first performer (and her compatriot) Kirsten Flagstad, rather than to any of the more lyrical sopranos that have dominated over the last decades. There are many wonderful moments, such as the final hushed phrase of 'September', leading to that heartbreaking horn solo, beautifully done here.

But I miss the sense of these songs having been lived in, and Davidsen inevitably takes a little longer to get airborne in her phrases than lighter voices do, needing a bit more space to negotiate the bends of Strauss's melismas. And she's not helped by Esa-Pekka Salonen, whose conducting sometimes here feels strangely listless. The grand opening of 'Im Abendrot' (a distinctly broad nine minutes in this recording), for example, soon starts to sag and lose warmth – compare how Karajan fills out and sustains these phrases in his famous account with Gundula Janowitz.

Arguably Davidsen could have waited until she had more to say about these remarkable works before going into the studio with them. But there's still enormous pleasure to be had from hearing her in them, and this album only reinforces the fact that she is one of the greatest vocal talents to have emerged in recent years, if not decades. **Hugo Shirley**

Verdi

Messa da Requiem

Krassimira Stoyanova sop **Marina Prudenskaya** mez **Charles Castronovo** ten **Georg Zeppenfeld** bass **Dresden State Opera Chorus; Staatskapelle Dresden / Christian Thielemann**

Profil © 2 PH16075 (81' • DDD • T/t)

Recorded live at the Semperoper, Dresden, February 13, 2014



Although Christian Thielemann is primarily associated with the Germanic

greats, he – like his one-time mentor Herbert von Karajan – should not be underestimated as a Verdian. I might have found his *Otello* from Salzburg a little short on visceral thrills (C Major, 8/17), but his expansive, grand approach to the composer is a fine fit for his Requiem. In this terrific recording, made live at the Semperoper 69 years after the destruction of Dresden, we find Thielemann balancing the operatic and the ecclesiastical superbly, pacing Verdi's score unerringly.

He's helped by several factors. First is the Staatskapelle, who play with the expected virtuosity. The strings are silky and agile, and there's supreme musicality in the solo work (listen for the bassoon, urgent and eloquent, in the 'Quid sum miser'). The beautifully warm and rounded sound of the brass, meanwhile, imbues their music – so important in this work – with a special nobility. Their interjections in the 'Liber scriptus', Marina Prudenskaya soaring above them, are alone almost worth the price of admission.

The Russian mezzo is just one part of the fine solo quartet Thielemann has assembled. Georg Zeppenfeld, a stalwart of the Semperoper ensemble and Thielemann's recent Hans Sachs at Salzburg, provides a classy foundation, resonant and always tasteful. Charles Castronovo's voice is captured in vibrant – occasionally slightly over-vibrant – form, but he sings sensitively and movingly. Prudenskaya and Krassimira Stoyanova offer deeply moving performances, too. The mezzo sounds rich and human, the soprano secure and superbly musical. They present a lovely 'Recordare' together and Stoyanova is composed and affecting in the 'Liber me'. All four soloists come together for one of the most touching versions of the 'Lacrimosa' I've heard in a while, its heavy tread beautifully gauged by Thielemann.

And while the conductor is superb in the more reflective passages of the work, he is no less impressive when it comes to the fire and brimstone, with a 'Dies irae' that shakes the rafters with the best of them – helped, as throughout the whole recording – by the excellent work of the Sächsische Staatsoperchor. The sound, taken from an MDR broadcast, is not as clean and focused as it might be but does

Gramophone Choice Recordings

Disc of the month

Bach J S	Bach to the Future	Olivier Latry	£13.00
Beethoven	Cello Sonatas (2CD)	Elschenbroich, Grynyuk	£17.50
Chausson	Poème de l'amour, Symphonie	Gens, Bloch	£11.00
Gounod	Symphonies 1 & 2 (SACD)	Iceland SO, Tortelier	£11.00
Handel / Leo	Rinaldo (2DVD)	Iervolino, Luisi	£27.00
Reich	Live at Foundation Louis Vuitton	Reich, Currie	£ 8.50
Schubert	Sonatas & Impromptus (2CD)	(fortepiano) Schiff	£18.00
Saint-Saëns	Piano Concertos 3, 4 & 5 (SACD)	Kantorow	£10.50
Wagner	+ Strauss Lieder	Lise Davidsen, Salonen	£11.00
Weinberg #	Symphonies 2 & 21 (2CD)	Grażynyty-Tyla	£12.00
	An English Coronation (2CD)	McCreesh	£17.00

New Releases for June 2019

Beethoven	Piano Sonatas 1, 10, 21 & 22	Angela Hewitt	£11.00
Benjamin	Lessons in Love and Violence (2CD)	Benjamin	£12.50
Howells	Cello Concerto, English Mass (2CD)	King's, Cambs	£11.50
Janáček	Piano Works	Jan Bartoš	£11.00
Kabalevsky	Symphonies 1 & 2	Malmö SO, Ang	£ 7.00
Lassen	+ Langgaard Violin Concertos	Roth, Hermus	£11.00
Mendelssohn	Overtures (SACD)	CBSO, Gardner	£11.00
Mozart	Piano Concertos 20 & 21	Jean-Efflam Bavouzet	£11.00
Nicodé	Ein Liebesleben etc.	Simon Callaghan	£11.00
Sibelius	Lemminkäinen Suite, Spring Song	Oramo	£11.00
	Edition (11CD)	Brigitte Fassbaender	£31.00
	Landmarks: 40 Years of Chandos	(40CD LTD)	£46.00
	Si J'ai Aimé	Sandrine Piau	£11.00

Harmonia Mundi Promotion

Bartók	Complete String Quartets (2CD)	The Heath Quartet	£11.00
Bartók	Violin Concertos 1 & 2	Faust, Harding	£ 9.00
Beethoven	+ Berg Violin Concertos	Faust, Abbado	£ 9.00
Beethoven	Piano Trios 6 & 7	Faust, Queyras, Melnikov	£ 9.00
Berlioz	Harold en Italie, Nuits d'été	Les Siècles, Roth	£ 9.00
Brahms	Vier ernste Gesänge	Goerne, Eschenbach	£ 9.00
Britten	Hymn to St Cecilia	RIAS Kammerchor, Doyle	£ 9.00
Debussy	Études	Roger Muraro	£ 9.00
Debussy	Les Trois Sonates	Faust, Queyras, Melnikov	£ 9.00
Debussy	Préludes & La Mer	Melnikov, Pashchenko	£ 9.00
Debussy	Suite Bergamasque etc.	Nikolai Lugansky	£ 9.00
Fauré	Requiem	Zomer, Genz, Herreweghe	£ 9.00
Franck	Violin Sonata + Chausson	Faust, Melnikov	£ 9.00
Handel	Mr Handel's Dinner	Steiger, La Cetra	£ 9.00
Haydn	Die sieben letzten Worte	Ensemble Resonanz	£ 9.00
Haydn	Piano Sonatas 13, 33 & 58	Bezuidenhout	£ 9.00
Haydn	Piano Sonatas 32, 40, 49 & 50	Paul Lewis	£ 9.00
Haydn	Piano Trios	Trio Wanderer	£ 9.00
Mahler	Symphony No. 5	Swedish RSO, Harding	£ 9.00
Mozart	Sonatas for fortepiano & violin	Faust, Melnikov	£ 9.00
Rachmaninov	Sonatas for Cello & Piano etc.	Philippe, Ducros	£ 9.00
Rachmaninov	Piano Trios	Trio Wanderer	£ 9.00
Ravel	Daphnis & Chloé	Les Siècles, Roth	£ 9.00
Ravel	Mother Goose	Les Siècles, Roth	£ 9.00
Schumann	Liederkreis, Kernerlieder	Goerne, Andsnes	£ 9.00
Shostakovich	Piano Concertos	Melnikov, Currentzis	£ 9.00
Victoria	Tenebrae Responsories	Stile Antico	£ 9.00
Weber	+ Schubert Piano Sonatas	Paul Lewis	£ 9.00
	Sirènes: Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner	d'Oustrac, Jordan	£ 9.00

Free Monthly New Release & Special Offer Listings

We accept payment by Cheque / Visa / MasterCard

Postal Charges UK - First item £1.50, then £0.50 per item **Box Sets** £3.00

Maximum UK postage charge = £3.00

Europe - First item £2.00, then £1.00 per item **Box Sets** from £2.50

Outside Europe at cost Prices valid until 30.07.19 and include VAT at 20%

Office Hours Monday - Saturday 9.00am - 5.00pm Answerphone on Wednesdays

Orders: 01787 882223 Classics Direct

91 North Street, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 1RF. UK E-mail: sales@classicsdirect.co.uk

www.classicsdirect.co.uk to view our special offer listings

Hazard Chase

International artist & project management

VOCAL DEPARTMENT

STAGE DIRECTOR

John Copley
Sophie Daneman

TENOR

Charles Daniels
Ryland Davies
James Gilchrist
Peter Hoare
Mark Le Brocq
Daniel Norman
Joshua Owen Mills
Caspar Singh
Adrian Thompson
Lawrence Wilford

SOPRANO

Marie Arnet
Claire Booth
Sinéad Campbell-Wallace
Stephanie Corley
Sophie Daneman
Judith Howarth
Ellie Laugharne
Elizabeth Llewellyn
Joanne Lunn

BARITONE

William Dazeley
David Kempster

MEZZO-SOPRANO

Jurgita Adamonytė
Rebecca Afonwy-Jones
Anne Mason
Paula Murrihy
Anne-Marie Owens
Natalie Pérez
Madeleine Shaw
Anna Stéphany
Kitty Whately
Louise Winter

BASS-BARITONE

Simon Bailey
Edward Grint
Martin Hässler
Tristan Hambleton

ACCOMPANISTS

Sholto Kynoch
Anna Tilbrook

CONTRALTO

Jess Dandy

Visit our website for full contact details and to see current artist and project lists.

www.hazardchase.co.uk



@hazardchaseltd



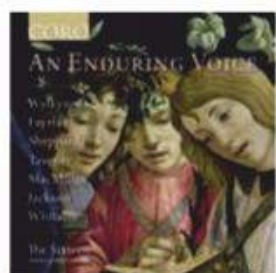
@hazardchasevocal

little to detract from this fine, moving performance. Highly recommended.

Hugo Shirley

'An Enduring Voice'

Fayrfax Eternae laudis liliu **G Jackson Ave**
Maria MacMillan O virgo prudentissima
Sheppard Missa Cantate – Gloria; Agnus Dei
Tavener Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God. A Hymn to the Mother of God. Song for Athene **Whitacre** Sainte-Chapelle **Wylkynson**
 Salve regina
The Sixteen / Harry Christophers
 Coro © COR16170 (77' • DDD • T/t)



In addition to accompanying their 2019 Choral Pilgrimage, The

Sixteen's latest disc also serves as a celebration of the choir's 40th anniversary in an anthology centred on texts in praise of the Virgin Mary in all her facets, spanning music from six centuries and two continents. Harry Christophers guides his choristers from their initial recording roots in 16th-century Tudor repertory through to half a dozen masterpieces dating from the past 40 or so years.

The recorded balance is velveteen, almost, with gentler consonants than some other chamber choirs of similar calibre and a warming, light vibrato from the sopranos. This sound world suits Eric Whitacre's *Sainte-Chapelle* perfectly, where the blended tone blossoms into polychromatic splendour.

James MacMillan's motet *O virgo prudentissima* takes as its starting point a surviving six-bar fragment by Robert Wylkynson (c1450-1515) in the Eton Choirbook. MacMillan's setting of Angelo Poliziano's poem of 1493 is as colourful, inventive and responsive as anything I have heard by a contemporary composer. Listen out for the astonishing vocalising close-harmony female siren voices around 7'20". The disc's centrepiece is Wylkynson's 14-minute-long *Salve regina*, in which he divides the choir into nine parts, each depicting one of the nine orders of angels. This performance is flawless.

As with anything composed by MacMillan, Gabriel Jackson's *Ave Maria* setting is utterly compelling. Luscious, floating melismas capture Mary's grace and blessedness to perfection. John Tavener makes three appearances, including the 'bonus' track *Song for Athene*. Although I love this piece, I felt it needed more 'fragility' and a greater sense of ecstatic abandon. Plaudits, however,

to the magnificent second basses, who provide a rock-steady foundation.

An enjoyable programme, however, featuring impeccable tuning and a polished choral blend. **Malcolm Riley**

'An English Coronation 1902-1953'

Bullock Come, Holy Ghost **Byrd** I will not leave you comfortless **Croft** O God, our help in ages past **Elgar** Coronation March, Op 65. O hearken thou, Op 64. Pomp and Circumstance March, Op 39 No 1 **Gibbons** O clap your hands together **Handel** Zadok the Priest, HWV258 **Howells** The King's Herald **Luther** Rejoice today with one accord (arr JS Bach) **D Matthews** Recessional and National Anthem **Merbecke** The Lord's Prayer **Parratt** Confortare: Be strong and play the man **Parry** Chorale Fantasia on 'O God, our help'. I was glad **Purcell** Hear my prayer, Z15 **Redford** Rejoice in the Lord alway **Stanford** 'Coronation' Gloria **Tallis** Litany **Vaughan Williams** Mass in G minor – Credo; Sanctus. The Old Hundredth Psalm Tune. O taste and see **Walton** Coronation Te Deum. Crown Imperial **SS Wesley** Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace **C Wood** O most merciful **Simon Russell Beale** *spkr* **Gabrieli** Roar; **Gabrieli Consort & Players / Paul McCreesh** **Signum** © (two discs for the price of one) **SIGCD569** (159' • DDD • T)



On his tireless voyage of ceremonial and liturgical

reconstruction, Paul McCreesh's 20th-century coronation anthology is arguably his most ambitious and intricate to date. If the various Mass, coronation and Vespers projects from the Gabrielis over the past 30 years have displayed the full gamut of prevailing instrumental and vocal genres from a single occasion (for instance, Doge Grimani's investiture in 1595), the best music from four recent English coronations – 1902, 1911, 1937 and 1953 – is selected here in a procession from the assemblage of protagonists to the recession into the streets. In between, we witness oaths, anointing and communion, adorned by an exhilaratingly varied diet of professional and amateur choral and instrumental groups.

On a conceptual level, McCreesh is not so much reconstructing as celebrating the unique cultural ritual of pageantry described by the historian Roy Strong as a 'marriage of tradition and innovation'. And how comfortably the golden-age greats of Tallis, Byrd and Gibbons reside

here in the bosom of their respectful modern-day counterparts who provided the commissions: Wood, Elgar, Howells, Walton and a splendid new recessional by David Matthews. As each coronation is meticulously documented, decisions are built on firm historical foundations without the black holes of earlier Renaissance and Baroque forays which require a necessarily speculative imagination.

Well-articulated insights into the rich theatrical dimension of this quartet of coronations work best in the large works, all of which sound spectacular in the ringing acoustic, and whose atmosphere is enhanced by ambient and anticipatory shuffle of a large congregation between each number. Taken on their own terms, the smaller works generally seem less well defined and distinctive (Gibbons's *O clap your hands* is a case in point). There's a suspicion that primary attention to the vast canvas inhibits specific nuancing of individual musical works. I missed an affectionate conceit in Wesley's *Thou wilt keep him* and *Zadok the Priest* sounds more driven than majestic, and rather too sleekly Georgian.

Some may find the extensive spoken liturgy excessive but such is Simon Russell Beale's compelling delivery that the sheer beauty of the words offers a musical diversion of a different kind. Most impressive, perhaps, is how extremes of unalloyed opulence sit so movingly alongside intimate supplication, notably in the lonely solemnity of a monarch facing God. A particularly stately Parry *I was glad* contrasts powerfully with the deliberate interiority of Purcell's *Hear my prayer*.

Clear reference points in the choice of interpretative style also impart a striking coherence to the project. No attempt is made to engage with the kinds of singing heard in early music of the day – which could be considered a pointless piece of archaeology. Not unlike Robert King's excellent disc of Stanford and Parry on 'period' instruments (Vivat, 3/13), early-century performance practice illuminates almost all the 'commissioned' pieces: the orchestral works, from Elgar's *Coronation March* to Walton's *Crown Imperial*, are infectious lean, transparent and restrained, with the kind of decisive parade-ground 'clip' redolent of British Pathé voices. These are the jewels in the crown. One can imagine the virtuosity required by every contributor, at every turn, to make this a reality, let alone a dazzling triumph. The documentation is comprehensive and satisfying.

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

'Imaginario'

Anonymous Se pur ti guardo. Si de vos mi bien me aparto **Arcadelt** Chiare, fresche et dolci acque. Se per colpa del vostro fiera sdegno **Josquin** Inviolata, integra et casta es Maria. Tu solus qui facis mirabilia **Morales** Missa Dezilde al cavallero – Agnus Dei **Rore** Anchor che col partire. La vite fugge **Segni** Ricercar **Vasquez** O dulce contemplación. Por una vez que mis ojos alcé. Qué sentís, coração mio. Quien dice que l'ausencia causa olvido. Si no os uviera mirado. Vós me matastes **Willaert** Dulces exuviae. O dulce vita mia
María Cristina Kiehr *sop* **Ariel Abramovich, Jacob Heringman** *vihuelas*
Armonía Concertada / John Potter *ten*
 Arcana Ⓢ A460 (62' • DDD • T/t)



Inspired by seven surviving vihuela songbooks published between

1536 and 1576, this programme proffers a newly imagined book 'as if published in Valladolid or Seville between 1570 and 1580', with arrangements by Ariel Abramovich and Jacob Heringman. The disc is also something of a solo Renaissance debut for María Cristina Kiehr, capturing her wonderfully clear and controlled tone in the most intimate combination: solo voice and vihuela. I have been a fan of her artistry ever since I first heard René Jacobs's groundbreaking recording of Caldara's *Maddalena ai piedi di Cristo* (Harmonia Mundi, 11/96), in which she sang the part of Magdalen. Yet, despite her distinctive soprano voice rarely venturing outside Baroque repertoire, this album, with its strong focus on Spain's Golden Age, will quickly prompt a delightful recalibration of her repertoire.

Kiehr has a ceramic glaze to her delivery: smooth and cool on the surface but warm and pleasingly textured underneath. Her dark vowels create a rich tone that never falters but just occasionally – in Arcadelt's *Se per colpa del vostro fiera sdegno* in particular – I would prefer more immediacy. Elsewhere she is supreme in bright, luminous textures: the refreshing wash of Arcadelt's *Chiare, fresche et dolci acque* is superb.

John Potter – another long-term collaborator with Abramovich – is a welcome visitor in this programme, bound up as it is with his own specialism of Renaissance polyphony arranged for voice and lute. Referred to as 'mythical' on the disc's official webpage ([\[music.com\]\(http://music.com\)\), his warm and soft-grained voice brings a change of texture for Josquin's *Inviolata, integra et casta es Maria* at the mid-point.](http://outhere-</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

Undercutting all of this is the wonderful vihuela-playing of Abramovich and Heringman. Beautifully recorded, their detailed execution of these complex polyphonic textures is as impressive and enjoyable as the programme they have created. **Edward Breen**

'Leonardo'

'Shaping the Invisible'

JS Bach Die Kunst der Fuge, BWV1080 – No 1
Daniel-Lesur Le jardin clos **Howells** Salvator mundi **Janequin** La guerre **Josquin** Missa L'homme armé sexti toni – Agnus Dei
Monteverdi Era l'anima mia, SV96. Tempo la cetra, SV117 **Rore** Or che'l ciel e la terra **Rubbra** Amicus meus **Tallis** Salvator mundi **Vecchi** Daspuò che stabilao **Victoria** Alma redemptoris mater. Unus ex discipulus meis
A Williams Shaping the Invisible
I Fagiolini / Robert Hollingworth
 Coro Ⓢ COR16171 (72' • DDD)



Clouds of doubt may have recently gathered around Leonardo da Vinci's

Salvator mundi – the most expensive painting in the world, authenticated in 2011 but subsequently kept from public view – but there's absolutely no questioning the provenance of this rather extraordinary recording. Only I Fagiolini and their artistic director Robert Hollingworth could have come up with a project spanning not only centuries and styles (Rore brushes shoulders with Rubbra, Janequin, Bach and Daniel-Lesur) but also art forms, and pulled it off so convincingly.

Leaving others to mark Leonardo's 500th anniversary with predictable 'Leonardo and his Musical World' homages, Hollingworth and his intrepid musicians strike out in a rather different direction. With the help of the art historian Martin Kemp they have chosen 10 of the artist's images (including *The Last Supper*, *Mona Lisa* and the *Vitruvian Man*) and matched them to musical works chosen to echo, amplify or offer commentary on the many different aspects of Leonardo's philosophy, style and subject matter.

The title painting, for example, finds itself paired with Tallis's and Howells's settings of the *Salvator mundi* (though neither, in their forthright, forward-

moving delivery, seems to chase the painting's cloudy, *sfumato* stillness), while the vivid action-shot of *The Battle of Anghiari* finds its soundtrack in the clash and clatter of Janequin's *La guerre*. And what else could accompany that geometric exploration of proportion the *Vitruvian Man* than Bach's Contrapunctus I from *The Art of Fugue*, rendered wordlessly here, Swingles-style, by four unaccompanied voices?

Most striking is the pairing of the protuberant features of Leonardo's *Five Grotesques* with the earthy exaggeration and vocal manipulations of Orazio Vecchi's madrigal comedy *L'Amfiparnaso*. I Fagiolini are at their best here and in the secular works by Janequin and Monteverdi – music dominated by drama and character – where their daring and sense of play can come to the fore. Their sacred polyphony will divide listeners but those favouring a more interventionist, Italianate approach (the opposite of The Sixteen's otherworldly Anglicanism) will take pleasure in the sensuality of Victoria's *Alma redemptoris mater* and the spacious sonic effects of the *Agnus Dei* from Josquin's *L'homme armé* Mass.

With flexible forces expanding from just four voices up to a nearly 40-strong instrumental and choral ensemble, I Fagiolini are at their most malleable and multifaceted here in a luxury project that can't have come cheap. Colour images of all the paintings are lovingly reproduced in the booklet, giving the listener as much of the full experience (the programme is being toured currently, complete with projected images) as possible. But it seems like a false economy to banish the all-important texts to the website. Music may help to 'shape the invisible' but its structures are fragile without the scaffolding of text.

Alexandra Coghlan

'Reason in Madness'

Brahms Fünf Ophelia Lieder, WoO *posth* 22. Mädchenlied, Op 107 No 5. Sie trugen ihn auf der Bahre bloss, WoO22 No 4 **Chausson** Chanson d'Ophélie **Debussy** Chansons de Bilitis **Duparc** Au pays où se fait la guerre. Romance de Mignon, Op 2 No 3 **Koechlin** Chansons de Bilitis, Op 39. Hymne à Astarté **Poulenc** La dame de Monte-Carlo **Saint-Saëns** La mort d'Ophélie **Schubert** Gretchen am Spinnrade, D118 **Schumann** Sechs Gesänge, Op 107 – No 1, Herzeleid; No 4, Die Spinnerin **R Strauss** Drei Lieder der Ophelia, Op 67 **Wolf** Mignon Lieder
Carolyn Sampson *sop* **Joseph Middleton** *pf*
 BIS Ⓢ BIS2353 (75' • DDD/DSD • T/t)



Paul McCreesh and his massed Gabrieli Consort stage a magnificent reconstruction of a 20th-century English Coronation – see review on page 89



‘There is always some madness in love. But there is also always some reason in madness’, Nietzsche wrote. His words form the starting point for Carolyn Sampson and Joseph Middleton’s strikingly programmed recital that examines male musical responses to a number of literary heroines who are prey to the forces of unreason. It’s not, by any means, an exercise in psychopathology. ‘Madness’ is perhaps too narrow a definition for many of the emotional states that Sampson explores, and her focus falls primarily on women ‘whose stories’, as she puts it, ‘have left them vulnerable and exposed’.

Ophelia, sinking into insanity, is placed alongside androgynous Mignon, yearning for a world beyond the one in which she finds herself. Sampson’s inclusion of ‘Gretchen am Spinnrade’ allows her to glance at other women in Lieder by Schumann and Brahms, who sit at their

spinning wheels reflecting on similar unhappiness. Debussy’s *Bilitis*, emotionally ambivalent towards her seducer, contrasts sharply with the depictions of assertive, exultant female sexuality of Koechlin’s very different *Bilitis* songs. The disc closes, meanwhile, with Poulenc’s bitter ‘La dame de Monte-Carlo’, in which a gambling addict contemplates suicide as money, luck and self-esteem gradually run out.

Much of this repertoire suits Sampson wonderfully well. Her silvery tone suggests fragility from the outset, while her restrained way with words admirably conveys the vagaries of desire, distress and confusion. She makes a fine Ophelia, both in Strauss’s manic-depressive songs and in Brahms’s lesser-known *Ophelia Lieder*, with their eerie snatches of half-remembered folk music. The ease and brilliance of her upper registers, meanwhile, are heard to fine effect in her passionate performance of ‘Gretchen am Spinnrade’, while Koechlin’s ‘Hymne à Astarté’ genuinely startles with its fearsome ascents into the stratospheres.

Just occasionally elsewhere, however, we’re aware of a lack of weight lower in the voice. Duparc’s ‘Au pays où se fait la guerre’ lies fractionally low, as does Wolf’s ‘Kennst du das Land’, and it is perhaps significant that Sampson rearranges the conventional order of the *Mignon Lieder* to end with ‘So lasst mich scheinen’, which is simply heart-rending here. The *Chansons de Bilitis* are coolly sensuous and poised, though I prefer the darker tone and more overtly sexual delivery of Marianne Crebassa on her ‘Secrets’ album (Erato, 12/17). The disc owes its success, meanwhile, as much to Middleton as to Sampson. His playing is beautifully subtle and accomplished, and you get a real sense of singer and accompanist thinking and feeling alike throughout. Despite minor qualms, it’s a very fine recital indeed.

Tim Ashley

Find your
music on
www.qobuz.com

qobuz

WHAT NEXT?

Do you have a favourite piece of music and want to explore further? Our monthly feature suggests some musical journeys that venture beyond the most familiar works, with some recommended versions. This month, **Richard Bratby**'s point of departure is ...

J Strauss II's Die Fledermaus (1874)

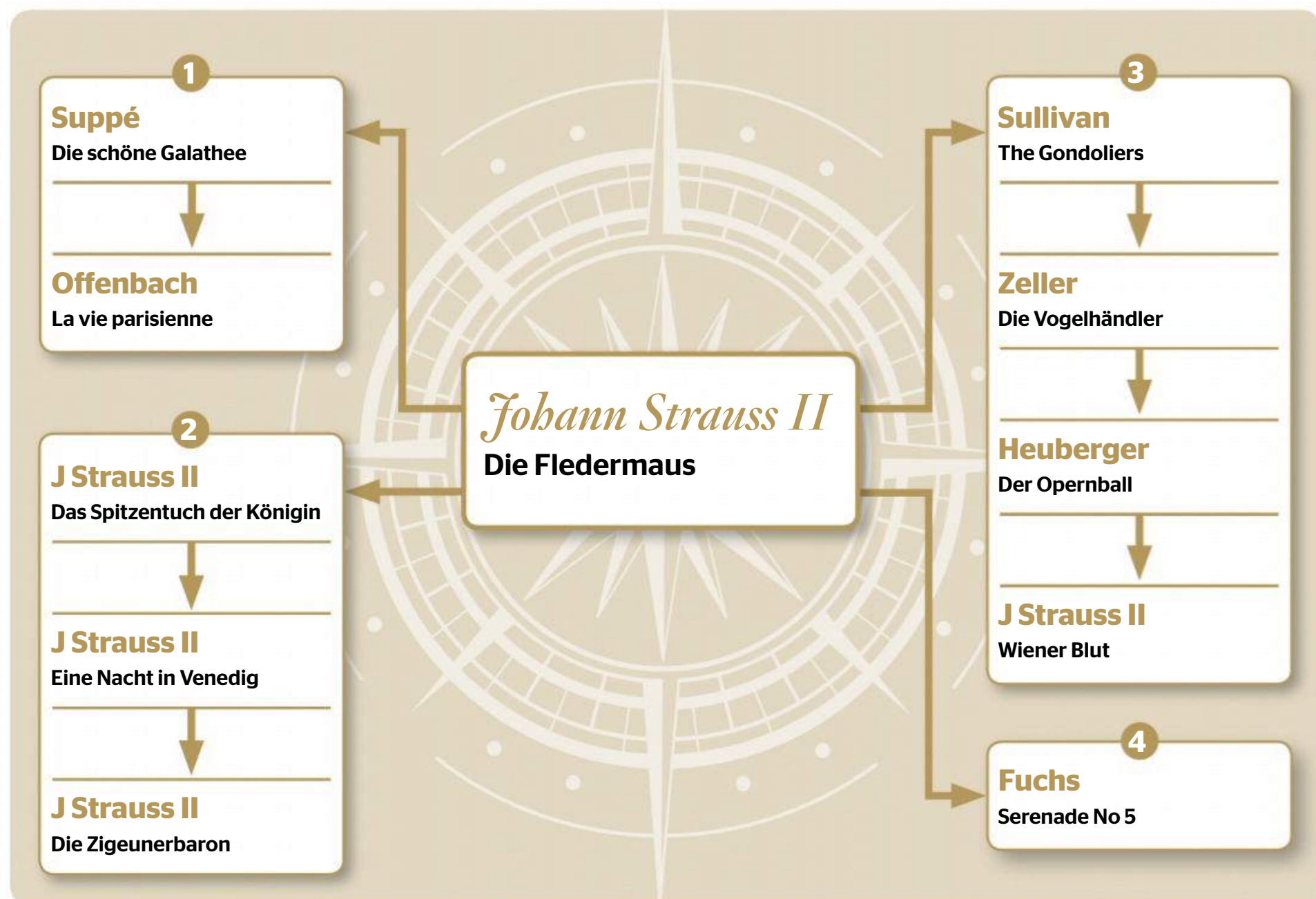
Three chords pop like champagne corks, and the operetta of all operettas is off to an uproarious start. It's hard now to believe that *Die Fledermaus* had only a modest success when it opened at the Theater an der Wien on April 5, 1874, and that the critic Eduard Hanslick dismissed it as a mere 'potpourri of waltz and polka motives'. Johann Strauss II didn't invent operetta, but he gave it its definitive Viennese form – three acts of farcical humour, light-hearted romance and aristocratic glamour, all swept along on a stream of dance tunes as effervescent and intoxicating as the champagne that fuels the plot. The quarter-century that followed *Die Fledermaus*'s premiere would come to be known as the 'golden age' of Viennese operetta, but when you hear a performance as

sparkling as Carlos Kleiber's joyous 1976 recording, you'll agree that while the work has often been imitated, it'll never be surpassed.

● Bavarian State Opera / Carlos Kleiber (DG, 10/76)

1 *Ancestors – rivals*

Suppé Die schöne Galathee (1865) We all know that the overture's terrific: but what about the rest of the show? Actually – as is often the case with the criminally underrated Suppé – it's a delight. It's firmly in the Offenbach mould, with a featherweight, cheerfully satirical classical plot (the sculptor Pygmalion falls in love with a statue he has carved) and an irrepressible freshness and *Schwung*



to its waltz and polka melodies as well as a beautiful choral evocation of dawn: just wistful enough to feel truly Viennese.

● Rhine Philharmonic State Orchestra / Thomas Eitler (CPO, 1/02)

Offenbach *La vie parisienne* (1866)

If *Die Fledermaus* has any real ancestor, it's Offenbach's up-to-the-minute satire of Second Empire morals in the City of Light. Misbehaving husbands and wives? Check. Scheming soubrettes? Check. Waltzes? Check. As well as being one of Offenbach's most brilliantly inventive scores, *La vie parisienne* was his first full-length success that dealt with a realistic contemporary story – effectively creating that whole imaginative world of white ties, champagne suppers and elegant dalliance.

● Grand Orchestre Symphonique / André Girard (Decca)

2 Straussiana

J Strauss II *Das Spitzentuch der Königin* (1880)

Practically unknown in the UK (where it was premiered, as *The Queen's Lace Handkerchief*, in 2017), this was a major hit in Strauss's lifetime. The plot concerns the writer Cervantes's attempts to reunite the estranged young King and Queen of Portugal. The King is a trouser role, and Strauss's ravishing ensemble writing for female voices makes you wonder whether his namesake Richard knew this work before starting *Der Rosenkavalier*. Many of the melodies reappear in the waltz *Rosen aus dem Süden*.

● Dresden State Operetta / Ernst Theis (CPO)

J Strauss II *Eine Nacht in Venedig* (1883) Drenched in Adriatic sunshine, and with a dramatis personae that includes the macaroni chef Pappacoda and the barber Caramello, Strauss's Venetian comedy suffered from libretto problems when it premiered in Berlin in 1883. It's usually performed in an edition prepared in 1923 by Korngold – and once you know that, it's impossible not to notice his discreet but unmistakable touches of orchestral glitter. For lovers of the Viennese tradition, that's all part of the fun.

● Munich Radio Orchestra / Kurt Eichhorn (Philips)

J Strauss II *Der Zigeunerbaron* (1885) After the Austrian Empire became Austria-Hungary in 1867, Viennese composers realised there was good money to be made from buttering up the Magyar public. Strauss went one better; and it's possible that – with its paprika-flavoured melodies, soaring ensemble finales and glowing orchestration – this big-hearted comedy of gypsy girls, pig farmers and hidden treasure in the depths of the Hungarian puszta is his most musically satisfying operetta. Some would even rate it above *Die Fledermaus* itself.

● Philharmonia Orchestra / Otto Ackermann (Warner Classics, 4/01)

3 The golden age

Sullivan *The Gondoliers* (1889) Not Strauss, not Suppé, not even Offenbach himself achieved a longer run of consistently successful



Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*: where to turn next for more operetta fun?

operetta masterpieces than Gilbert and Sullivan managed between *Trial by Jury* (1875) and *The Gondoliers*. 'G&S' is sometimes regarded as a peculiarly anglophone phenomenon, but *Die Gondoliere* was staged at the Theater an der Wien within 10 months of opening at the Savoy, and its Venetian setting, vibrant scoring and exuberant dance numbers place it firmly in the European mainstream.

● Pro Arte Orchestra / Malcolm Sargent (Warner Classics, 9/57)

Zeller *Die Vogelhändler* (1891) By day, Carl Zeller was a civil servant, and official regulations prevented him from appearing on stage to receive the ovation for his most successful operetta. The rustic love story of Adam the bird seller and Christel the postgirl is as bright and cheerful as a classical Singspiel, though it contains one number – the waltz-duet 'Schenkt man sich Rosen in Tirol' – whose languorous nostalgia prefigures the lush 'silver age' style of Lehár.

● Vienna Symphony Orchestra / Willi Boskovsky (Warner Classics, 12/75)

Heuberger *Der Opernball* (1898) Three men attend the Paris Opéra ball and end up trying to seduce their own disguised sweethearts. It's all the fault of champagne, apparently, and if imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, you have to admit that Heuberger carries it off with a very seductive smile. This is perhaps the last great golden age operetta (its hit song 'Im chambre séparée' has been recorded by various artists including Harry Secombe and Anna Netrebko), its luminous orchestration the work of none other than Zemlinsky.

● Graz Philharmonic Orchestra / Marius Burkert (CPO, 6/18)

J Strauss II *Wiener Blut* (1899) Between 1875 and 1930 there were at least 10 different attempts to create *pasticcios* from the Waltz King's unrivalled back catalogue of dance music. *Wiener Blut*, however, was actually authorised by the ailing Strauss himself, and although he never saw it staged, he clearly trusted Victor Léon and Leo Stein (the future librettists of *Die lustige Witwe*) to do a professional job. Of Strauss's 15 genuine operettas, only *Die Fledermaus* and *Der Zigeunerbaron* have been more popular than this one, packed as it is with favourite melodies.

● Philharmonia Orchestra / Otto Ackermann (Naxos, 12/54)

4 Long shot

Fuchs *Serenade No 5* (1895) From Brahms to Wagner, everyone with an ounce of taste in 19th-century European music revered Strauss, and Robert Fuchs (1847-1927) – the Viennese composition professor who taught (among others) Mahler, Sibelius, Enescu, Korngold, Zemlinsky and Wolf – was certainly no exception. As a composer, he was nicknamed 'Serenaden-Fuchs', and the finale of his fifth and final serenade for small orchestra is a spirited waltz-fantasy on themes from *Die Fledermaus*.

● Cologne Chamber Orchestra / Christian Ludwig (Naxos)

Available to stream at Qobuz, Apple Music and Spotify

Opera



Richard Osborne on a recent Paris staging of a late Rossini comedy:

'The orchestra pit doubles as the imagined cellar, from which the roistering nuns haul up their cache of vintage wines' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 100**



Mark Pullinger watches Weber's *Der Freischütz* from La Scala:

'Günther Groissböck's muscular bass is perfect for the role of the tortured forester in league with the devil' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 101**

Auber

La Sirène

Jeanne Crousaud *sop* Zerlina
Dorothée Lorthiois *sop* Mathéa
Xavier Flabat *ten* Scopetto
Jean-Noël Teyssier *ten* Scipion
Jean-Fernand Setti *bass* Le Duc de Popoli
Benjamin Mayenobe *bass* Nicolaio Bolbaya
Jacques Calatayud *bar* Pecchione

Les Métaboles; Orchestre des Frivolités

Parisiennes / David Reiland

Naxos ® 8 660436 (70' • DDD)

Recorded live at the Théâtre Impérial de Compiègne, France, January 26, 2018

Includes synopsis; French libretto downloadable from naxos.com



For Naxos's booklet to describe *La Sirène* (1844) as Auber's 14th most popular work

hardly raises expectations. But this little *opéra comique* (made even littler here by the omission of dialogue, as well as a few cuts) had considerable success in its day.

Its plot reads like an agglomeration of familiar tropes: a young girl with a miraculous voice (the siren of the title) wanders around Abruzzo courted both by an impresario wanting to recruit her for his opera troupe and a young sailor she once met in Naples. There are sundry noblemen plus smugglers, who in one scene avoid arrest by pretending they're rehearsing for a production of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*. It's all slight and inconsequential – and all over here in just over an hour – but undeniably charming, Auber's music jogging along merrily as the action plays out with reassuring and unthreatening inevitability.

The performances on this premiere recording are modest but engaging and entertaining as well. David Reiland secures bright and breezy playing from his appropriately named Orchestre des Frivolités Parisiennes. Jeanne Crousaud doesn't quite live up the idealised Siren of the title but sings with charm, as do the

two tenors, Xavier Flabat and Jean-Noël Teyssier. The lower men's voices sing characterfully, as do Les Métaboles, even if some of their contributions get a little lost in the rough-and-tumble.

Naxos's presentation runs to a synopsis, and anyone who follows the link to their online libretto will find a scan of a libretto from, one assumes, near the time of the opera's premiere, replete with engravings depicting certain scenes. If this largely forgotten corner of operatic history is your thing, this release is well worth exploring.

Hugo Shirley

Bellini

I Puritani

Ana Durlovski *sop* Elvira
René Barbera *ten* Arturo
Gëzim Myshketa *bar* Riccardo
Adam Palka *bass* Giorgio
Diana Haller *mez* Enrichetta
Roland Bracht *bass* Gualtiero
Heinz Göhrig *ten* Bruno

Stuttgart State Opera Chorus; Stuttgart State Orchestra / Manlio Benzi

Stage directors **Jossi Wieler** and **Sergio Morabito**

Video director **Marcus Richardt**

Naxos ® ② DVD 2 110598/9; ® NBD0093V
 (3h 11' • NTSC • 1080i • 16:9 • DTS-HD MA5.1,
 DTS5.0 & PCM stereo • 0 • s)

Recorded live, July 17 & 24, 2018

Includes synopsis



Do you play the sober Roundhead or try a flamboyant Cavalier approach to Bellini's tricky English Civil

War melodrama? Like poor Elvira, betrothed to an uninteresting Puritan but drawn to the riskier chap with the fancy hat and silky hair, this production from the Staatsoper Stuttgart jumps from sobriety to wildness, and from a (kind of) clarity to studied disregard for realism or characterisation.

In the transfer from claustrophobic theatrical production to DVD/Blu-ray

release, the inconsistencies are off-putting. Jossi Wieler and Sergio Morabito have decided that the opera's implausibilities show us 'Elvira's dream factory at work'. The setting is more 20th-century Amish than 17th-century Puritan, with strip lighting hung over a stylised, bare set by Anna Viebrock. Sometimes the kin of Ana Durlovski's Elvira are a proper bible-bashing, frightening lot; at other times they are twitching zombies – a difficult mode for this vocally chiselled group to plausibly slip into. Meanwhile, the dream factory is at work, producing chimeras in the guise of René Barbera's Arturo, the Cavalier, and Diana Haller's Enrichetta, Charles I's widow, who are in full 17th-century fig. They aren't real, and Elvira will never find happiness in their world.

The flight into a historical fantasy is a decent idea but there is too much gestural theatre here; fine performances are boxed into sloppy choreography. It just doesn't feel joined-up. Perhaps Elvira is the only real person at all? Well, that only helps us so much. Current opera-producer clichés to tick off include a lot of dress-up (Elvira is often buttoning up her smock-dress or casting it off) and graffiti daubed on walls, only for it to be painstakingly washed off later.

It clearly made an impact on stage. Perhaps this was because the voices are very strong, and the incisive conducting by Manlio Benzi is idiomatic and propulsive (this version of the score includes all the music played at the Paris premiere). Durlovski's slightly covered tone puts a nice pallor on Bellini's long-breathed lines: she shapes phrases vividly and darts happily through 'Vien, diletto'. Barbera's heady, airy tenor suits Arturo's music perfectly – no mean feat. Haller adds mezzo swagger in the walk-on/walk-off role of Enrichetta and the baritone Gëzim Myshketa is a stylish if occasionally overwrought Riccardo.

It is a testament to the depth of talent in Stuttgart's ensemble that its company bass Adam Palka can make such a good fist of



Ana Durlovski, as Elvira, vividly shapes Bellini's phrases in his last opera, *I Puritani*

Giorgio, Elvira's dominant confidant. Too young for the part, Palka nonetheless sings with focus and nobility and, partnered by Myshketa, that barnstorming duet 'Suoni la tromba' still sparks shivers. **Neil Fisher**

Donizetti

L'ange de Nisida

Joyce El-Khoury *sop* Countess Sylvia de Linares

David Junghoon Kim *ten* Leone de Casaldi

Laurent Naouri *bass-bar* Don Gaspar

Vito Priante *bar* Don Fernand d'Aragon

Evgeny Stavinsky *bass* Monk/Father Superior

Chorus and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House /

Sir Mark Elder

Opera Rara ② ORC58 (157' • DDD)

Recorded live, July 18 & 21, 2018

Includes synopsis, libretto and translation



There's a little bit about the background to *The Angel of Nisida*

(an island off Naples) in my article on Opera Rara in the July 2018 issue of *Gramophone*. It's not so much a rediscovery as a clever reconstruction of an opera that was never completed, the first of the concert performances from which this

recording is taken being the world premiere. It was commissioned by the Théâtre de la Renaissance in Paris, where the French version of *Lucia di Lammermoor* was performed to great acclaim in August 1839. Donizetti set to work, incorporating material from his unfinished opera *Adelaide*; but the theatre went bankrupt in May 1840 and that was that. The composer reused nearly half the material in *La favorite* (December 1840), his adaptation overlaying the original manuscript. The task of assembling and creating a performing version of *L'ange de Nisida* has been magnificently achieved by the musicologist Candida Mantica, with Martin Fitzpatrick completing, composing or orchestrating where necessary. The booklet articles by Roger Parker and Mantica herself are invaluable, though both understate the similarities of character and action between *L'ange* and *La favorite* (for Sylvia, Leone and Don Fernand read Léonor, Fernand and Alphonse XI); while Mantica makes a complicated story even more confusing by mentioning the rehearsal period as running from February to May 1839, when clearly the year was 1840.

Leone is mutually in love with Sylvia (the angel of the title), not knowing that

she is the unwilling mistress of Don Fernand, the King of Naples. To placate the Church, the king agrees that Sylvia should be married off, the husband to be rewarded and packed off abroad without her. Leone is deputed to escort her to Rome; the situation unravels when Leone enthusiastically offers to be not merely the escort but the husband. Sylvia is appalled by what she takes to be Leone's mercenary behaviour; Leone is equally appalled when he discovers the truth about Sylvia and the king. He retires to a monastery; Sylvia, now aware that his love was true, seeks him out but dies as they are reconciled.

There's a faint anticipation here of the ending to *La forza del destino*. Donizetti's plot is more credible than Verdi's, just about, though 'drained of my strength by sorrow' does not seem sufficient reason for Sylvia's death. What makes the opera unusual are the shafts of comedy. Don Gaspar, the king's chamberlain, is a *buffo* bass: his patter song, 'Et vous Mesdames', turns up as 'Un foco insolito' in *Don Pasquale* (1843), and at one point he amusingly fears the fate that befell Peter Abelard. The king is an interesting figure who genuinely loves Sylvia and is devastated at the thought of losing her.

Explore 30 years of *Opera Now*

WHEN YOU BECOME A DIGITAL SUBSCRIBER



To celebrate our 30th anniversary, every issue since 1989 is now available to read in our digital archive. You can enjoy:

- Every page of every issue of Opera Now ever published
- A powerful search tool that allows you to explore 30 years of features and reviews
- New issues delivered monthly to your door, desktop computer, iPhone and/or iPad

Subscribe to our 'digital' or 'print & digital' packages today

 magsubscriptions.com/music

 0800 137 201

 subscriptions@markallengroup.com



Attractive and idiomatic: Frankfurt Opera's production of Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* stands up to stiff competition – see review on page 98

Mark Elder conducts this attractive score with love. There's an irresistible bounce to the lighter passages and he provides sensitive, understated support for the characters' emotional outpourings, with some beautiful playing from the horns. Laurent Naouri characterises Don Gaspar very well, despite not being in best voice. There is no aria for the king, but Vito Priante's forthright delivery of 'Ô mon ange que j'implore' in the Act 2 finale is surely an indication of future greatness as a Verdi baritone. David Junghoon Kim, accomplished throughout, is particularly fine in the introspective 'Hélas! Envolez-vous, beaux songes!'; it's followed by a beautifully shaped phrase in the bassoons and lower strings. Joyce El-Khoury is quite wonderful, with a virtuoso account of her Act 3 aria, from the regret of 'Frais ombrage' to the inappropriately skittish cabaletta which the editors have adapted from an addition for Paris to the score of *Maria di Roban* ('Benigno il cielo arridere'). This labour of love is not going to convert the sceptics but it will be welcomed and enjoyed by anyone attuned to the delights of Donizetti.

Richard Lawrence

Handel/Leo

Rinaldo

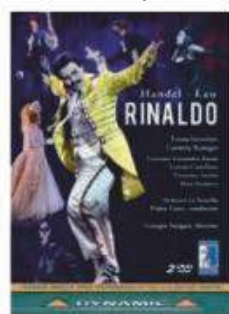
Teresa Iervolino *mez* Rinaldo
Loriana Castellano *mez* Almirena
Francisco Fernández-Rueda *ten* Goffredo
Carmela Remigio *sop* Armida
Francesca Ascioti *contr* Argante
Dara Savinova *mez* Eustazio
Valentina Cardinali *sng* Lesbina
Simone Tangolo *sng* Nesso

Orchestra La Scintilla / Fabio Luisi

Stage director **Giorgio Sangati**

Video director **Matteo Ricchetti**

Dynamic (M) (3) CDS7831/3; (F) (2) DVD 37831;
 (F) Blu-ray 57831 (3h 36' • DDD • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080i •
 DTS-HD MA5.1, DD5.1 & PCM stereo • 0 • s)
 CD includes synopsis, libretto and translation;
 DVD/Blu-ray includes synopsis



Extravagantly premiered at the Queen's Theatre, Haymarket, in 1711, *Rinaldo* made Handel's

reputation in London and received more stagings, at home and abroad, than any other opera in his lifetime. At each revival the score was adapted to accommodate new singers.

On the continent, especially, itinerant stars would often replace Handel's original arias with *arie di baule* – calling cards that they carried around in their portfolios. So it was in Naples in 1718, when the young composer Leonardo Leo and a local librettist undertook a radical reworking of *Rinaldo* for performances celebrating the birthday of Emperor Charles VI. With barely a third of Handel's music retained, the upshot was in effect a mix-and-match *pasticcio*. The royal occasion demanded a sycophantic prologue (spoken here by a child), while comic interludes were de rigueur for Neapolitan audiences. Leo himself provided the prologue and interludes (of which the music is lost), plus a handful of new arias. The rest of the music was filched from pretty well every Italian opera composer worth his salt, from Giuseppe Orlandini and Giovanni Porta to Vivaldi and Handel's London rival Bononcini. Several numbers in this reconstruction by the Italian musicologist Giovanni Andrea Sechi are anonymous.

The original *Rinaldo* prioritised scenic spectacle – especially magic transformations – over dramatic coherence. Not surprisingly, the 1718 Naples *pasticcio*,

recorded at the Valle d'Itria Festival in Martina Franca, is no less arbitrary. Giorgio Sangati's staging, mixing (vaguely) 18th-century costumes, Venice carnival masks and modernist camp, is unpretentious and uncluttered. The substitute arias, often short-breathed, cannot rival Handel's energy and melodic breadth, and a few outstay their welcome. But they are effective enough, if sometimes too tepid for character and situation. There's a glaring incongruity in the final scene, for instance, where the condemned sorceress Armida – unrepentant in the Naples adaptation – rails against the Christians in a decorous Bononcini aria.

The 1718 cast included the Neapolitan castrato Nicolo Grimaldi ('Nicolino'), who had sung the title-role for Handel, plus assorted contraltos in the roles of Rinaldo's beloved Almirena (originally a soprano), the saracen king Argante and Goffredo's brother Eustazio. Here Rinaldo is not taken by a countertenor – which would have provided more vocal variety – but by the contralto Teresa Iervolino. If her style and vibrant, almost fruity timbre seem better suited to later music, she is a powerful, involving presence, singing an impassioned 'Cara sposa' and deploying ringing top notes in a vehement 'Mio cor', originally composed for Goffredo. Rinaldo also appropriates Almirena's famous sarabande aria 'Lascia chi'io pianga', to different words.

Cast as a contralto, Almirena here presents a more feisty figure than in Handel's original. Armed with a formidable chest register, Loriania Castellano sings the role with spirit and subtlety. The Armida, Carmela Remigio, looks more comic than menacing in her mannered gestures, but brings plenty of vocal power and temperament to the part. I didn't much care for the dry, monochrome tenor singing Goffredo or the over-the-top rasps and plunges from the Argante, here too much the pantomime villain. In the small role of Eustazio, Dara Savinova makes her mark with bright, incisive tone and an elegant sense of style.

Once or twice I thought the rhythms jogged too comfortably, with an over-weighted bass line. But on the whole Fabio Luisi judges tempo and character well and gets spruce playing from his band. As an entertaining snapshot of the 18th-century Italian opera business, complete with stylistic inconsistencies, this performance serves well enough. Just don't expect more than a smattering of Handel.

Richard Wigmore

Janáček

The Cunning Little Vixen

Louise Alder *sop*.....Vixen
Jenny Carlstedt *mez*.....Fox
Simon Neal *bar*.....Forester
Joanna Krasuska-Motulewicz *mez*.....
.....Forester's Wife/Owl
Beau Gibson *ten*.....Schoolmaster
Magnús Baldvinsson *bass*.....Priest
Sebastian Geyer *bar*.....Harašta
Nina Tarandek *mez*.....Dog/Woodpecker
Michael McCown *ten*.....Pásek
Britta Stallmeister *sop*.....Cock/Jay
Nora Friedrichs *sop*.....Innkeeper
Chorus of Frankfurt Opera; Frankfurt Opera and Museum Orchestra / Johannes Debus

Oehms ② OC982 (91' • DDD)

Recorded live, April-May 2016

Includes synopsis and libretto



Plenty of live performances, a handful of DVDs – but the long-term

presence in the record catalogues of two much-admired sets by (largely) British-based conductors (Mackerras on Decca, Rattle on Chandos) seems to have deterred modern successors. This belated Oehms appearance – with plenty of Anglophone singers in the cast – is a natural candidate for their Frankfurt Opera series of leading music-theatre works.

Debus leads a sprightly, well-integrated performance whose lightness makes an attractive and idiomatic contrast to those two older recordings. He is not afraid to vary his tempos in keeping (presumably) with an interesting-looking stage production that sometimes dresses the animals as human beings. Nor does he shy away from the score's many darker corners, like the music surrounding Harašta's shooting of the Vixen, or the quite epic – but never unnecessarily grand – evocations of nature and time passing. Or the (less tonal) passages, recalling contemporary composers Richard Strauss and Berg, that accompany the Fox and the Vixen getting together.

Debus's interpretation is matched by the audibly cheeky youth of Alder's Vixen and Carlstedt's bold Fox, roles that may often sound too mature but are here projected with text-conscious clarity and the right injection of comedy where necessary. And Neal's Forester and the locals in and around the inn are not the over-mature vocal greybeards sometimes heard. Neal manages a fine balance of non-sentimental emotion as he takes on board the changes in his life and the loss of both the Vixen and dream girl Terynka. The impression

thus given of the work as a chamber opera not deliberately blown up to 'grand opera' size suits the piece well and is matched here by preservation of an ideal stage/pit balance. No voice is covered, none of Janáček's exceptional wind and brass detail is lost and the punctuating timpani are especially clearly recorded.

This standard of performance is unfortunately not matched by a poor booklet. No English translation of the libretto is given and the German one admits it is based on the performance's surtitles and omits much of the stage directions. Moreover, the English translation of the artists' biographies is stilted and unidiomatic and the Badger that the Vixen expels from his sett in Act 2 has been forgotten altogether in the cast list. A pity. But for the discs themselves a warm and competitive recommendation.

Mike Ashman

Selected comparisons:

Mackerras (5/82^R) (DECC) 475 8670

Rattle (3/92^R, A/03) (CHAN) CHAN3101

Kálmán

Die Fäschingsfee

Camille Schnoor *sop*.....Princess Alexandra Maria
Daniel Prohaska *sng*.....Viktor Ronai
Nadine Zeintl *sng*.....Lori Aschenbrenner
Simon Schnorr *bar*.....Baron Hubert von Mützelberg
Maximilian Mayer *ten*.....Count Lothar Mereditt
Erwin Windegger *sng*.....

.....Duke Ottokar von Grevlingen

Chorus and Orchestra of the Gärtnerplatz State Theatre, Munich / Michael Brandstätter

CPO ② CPO555 147-2 (77' • DDD)

Recorded live at the Alte Kongresshalle, Munich, February 21 & 28, 2017

Includes synopsis



At the height of the Munich carnival a penniless artist falls in love with a princess

in disguise: 1917 must surely have been the last moment at which these classic operetta gambits could plausibly be deployed in a setting described as 'the present'. In fact, the genesis of Kálmán's *Die Fäschingsfee* is more complex than its plot. Originally composed for Budapest as *Zsuzsi kisasszony*, it was a hit in New York as *Miss Springtime* (PG Wodehouse co-wrote a new English libretto) before finally making it to Vienna, where critics remarked that Kálmán's 'Munich' sounded curiously Hungarian and the latest (German) librettist was nonplussed to hear barrel organs playing the melodies before he'd even finished writing the words.

Still, you can't blame those buskers. This is the show that Kálmán wrote immediately before the all-conquering *Die Csárdásfürstin*, and it's cut from the same melodic cloth. If the plot is reminiscent of Lehár's *The Count of Luxembourg*, the tunes are prime Kálmán, by turns lush and lively with (in Act 2, particularly) more than a splash of paprika. This 2017 production from Munich's Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz brings *Die Faschingsfee* home. Taken from live performances, the spoken dialogue is animated and realistic, and the recorded balance – with the orchestra noticeably recessed in relation to the singers – is convincingly theatrical.

The cast sound as if they're playing off each other too. Along with Daniel Prohaska as the artist Viktor, Camille Schnoor as the 'carnival fairy' Princess Alexandra Maria carries much of the musical action. Vocally, they make an attractive pair, with no shortage of warmth and style even if both tend to tighten at the top. Simon Schnorr as Hubert and Nadine Zeintl as Lori provide the comic relief, and he has a handsome enough baritone, though Zeintl's nasal cabaret soprano was probably more persuasive on stage than on disc. The same goes for the enthusiastic but scrappy choral and ensemble singing; still, the conductor Michael Brandstätter snaps the livelier numbers smartly along, and lets the big waltz melodies of the two extended finales spread out and soar, allowing just the right amount of nostalgia to seep into Kálmán's sunny little world.

The usual CPO provisos apply: there's no libretto and the sketchy synopsis makes it almost impossible to match the individual numbers to the story, let alone identify more than a handful of the cast members. Beggars can't be choosers, I suppose, but it'd be nice – just once in a while – to be able to welcome one of these CPO rediscoveries with the unqualified enthusiasm that Kálmán deserves. **Richard Bratby**

Piazzolla

María de Buenos Aires

Luciana Mancini *mez*.....María

Johannes Mertes *ten*.....Cantor

Daniel Bonilla-Torres *bass-bar*Duende

Beethoven Orchestra, Bonn /

Christopher Sprenger

Capriccio (M) ② C5305 (91' • DDD)

Recorded live at Theater Bonn, March 28 &

April 8, 2016

Includes synopsis, libretto and translation



Taped in concert in Bonn in 2016, this is the second recording of Piazzolla's *operita*

to appear in just over a year, and it must be said at the outset that it is markedly different, both in scale and tone, from its predecessor from the Edinburgh-based Mr McFall's Chamber on Delphian. The latter, directed from the bandoneón by Victor Villena, presents the work very much as a chamber piece with all the intimacy that implies. For Capriccio, in contrast, conductor Christopher Sprenger offers us something altogether grander, more overtly theatrical and in some ways perhaps also more conventionally operatic.

In addition to a classy line-up of solo instrumentalists, he has Bonn's plush-sounding Beethoven Orchester at his disposal; and where Villena casts a *cantaora*, Valentina Montoya Martínéz, in the title-role, Sprenger has the mezzo Luciana Mancini, whose roles include Monteverdi's Nerone and Annio in *La clemenza di Tito*. The vocal polarities are to some extent reversed when it comes to the two Cantors in their multiple roles: both are superbly idiomatic, though Villena's Nicholas Mulroy, well known as Bach's Evangelists, sounds wonderfully elegant, while Sprenger's Johannes Mertes, a

natural Grimes, is darker-toned and earthy, more like a conventional folk singer in fact. Daniel Bonilla-Torres's ironic Duende is warmer-voiced than Juanjo Lopez Vidal, his altogether more forthright, even aggressive counterpart for Delphian, though Bonilla-Torres is also faced with the difficult task of speaking the choric interjections, where Villena has an ensemble of actors.

The end result is notably reflective and at times short on the streetwise grit that Villena provides in spades. Like any major work, however, *María de Buenos Aires* admits of more than one approach, and in some ways the two interpretations should be seen as complementary rather than antithetical. Sprenger unearths a vein of sadness in the score that is easy to overlook amid its bravado, and his more classical approach pointedly reminds us both of Piazzolla's debt to Bach and of the work's antecedents in Weill's *Dreigroschenoper* and *Mahagonny*. Having the bandoneón as an ensemble player, however, slightly understates its role as the instrument of seduction that lures María from the suburbs and sets her on her existentially defiant but dangerous course through the dark side of Buenos Aires's nightlife.

This is no reflection on Lothar Hensel's exemplary playing, though, and there is indeed some brilliant instrumental work here, with beguiling flute solos from Mariska van der Sande and a really sleazy barroom sound from pianist Thomas Wise. Choosing one cast over another isn't easy. I prefer Mulroy's grace to Mertes's worldliness but would also argue that Mancini's bravura way with 'Yo soy María', bristling with energy and courage, gives her the edge over Montoya Martínéz, superb though she is. Villena's actors perhaps work fractionally better than Bonilla-Torres's one-man narration, though the latter is something of a tour de force in its own

E. GUTZWILLER & C^{IE}

PRIVATE BANKERS SINCE 1886

BASEL - GENEVA - ZURICH

WWW.GUTZWILLER.CH +41 61 205 21 00

PROUD PARTNER OF

laCetra

Barockorchester & Vokalensemble Basel

Andrea Marcon, Artistic Director



right. Sprenger's approach might, I suspect, have a more immediate appeal for those unfamiliar with the work itself or with Piazzolla's idiom, but if you love *María de Buenos Aires*, then ideally you need to have both. **Tim Ashley**

Selected comparison:

Villena (2/18) (DELP) DCD34186

Rameau

Les Indes galantes

Chantal Santon-Jeffery *sop* Hébè/Zima

Katherine Watson *sop* Émilie

Véronique Gens *sop* Phani

Reinoud Van Mechelen *ten*

..... Dom Carlos/Valère/Damon

Jean-Sébastien Bou *bar* Osman/Adario

Thomas Dolié *bar* Bellone/Huascar/Dom Alvar

Purcell Choir; Orfeo Orchestra / György Vashegyi

Glossa ® ② GCD924005 (124' • DDD)

Includes synopsis, libretto and translation



The first thing to say is that this is quite excellent, well up to the standard of

the two previous Rameau productions by the same artists: *Les fêtes de Polymnie* (4/15) and *Naiis* (8/18). If you enjoyed those recordings, stop reading and place your order now.

But there are some textual matters to clear up. The performance is based on the new critical edition by Sylvie Bouissou, who contributes one of the booklet articles. Various descriptions as an *opéra-ballet* and a *ballet héroïque*, *The Amorous Indies* was first performed at the Paris Opéra in August 1735. It thus came between *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733) and *Castor et Pollux* (1737). As so often with Rameau, there were revisions and more revisions. By the following year it had been enlarged to consist of a Prologue and four entrées. The version chosen for this recording is stated to be the last, from July 1761, by when Rameau had composed all his operas apart from *Les Boréades*. Thus there are only three entrées – the one dropped here is ‘Les fleurs’ – and there are alternative versions to some of the numbers in ‘Les Incas du Pérou’ and ‘Le Turc généreux’. Not all of them are given here, however: for instance, the earthquake-cum-volcano in ‘Les Incas’ is heard in the extended, harmonically adventurous version of the premiere. The part of Amour – Cupid – had been dropped after that first performance; as compensation, there's an extra air for Bellone, ‘C'est la gloire’.

That this performance is not, strictly speaking, of the 1761 version does not

of course detract from one's enjoyment. György Vashegyi gets wonderful singing and playing from his Hungarian forces, the Purcell Choir and (led by Simon Standage) the Orfeo Orchestra. The earthquake is vivid in the extreme, and so is the tempest in ‘Le Turc généreux’. The many dances are played with grace and the final Chaconne, with its bassoons and low oboes, is a delight. The woodwind are especially appealing when combined with the musettes.

The singers, some of whom have appeared with Vashegyi before, are all one could desire. Chantal Santon-Jeffery, who carols sweetly as Hébè in the prologue, is dazzling in Zima's ‘Régnez plaisirs et jeux’ at the end of ‘Les Sauvages’. In ‘Le Turc’, Katherine Watson is spine-tingling at the start of the tempest and touching when she is reunited with the Valère of Reinoud Van Mechelen, whose air ‘Sur ces bords une âme enflammée’ is a tiny, lyrical highlight in a scene mostly conducted in recitative. Van Mechelen is the lover in ‘Les Incas’, too, where he is partnered by Véronique Gens: forthright in dialogue with Dom Carlos and Huascar, she is gentle in her prayer to Hymen. As Huascar – a victim of unrequited love rather than a true villain – Thomas Dolié submits magnificently to being crushed to death when the volcano erupts for a second time. In the last entrée, ‘Les Sauvages’, the baritone Jean-Sébastien Bou does well in the tenor role of Adario, the noble savage preferred by Zima; as Osman, he brings real dignity to the rather perfunctory scene where the Turk shows his generosity. Apart from some over-enthusiastic timpani rolls, the whole thing – performance and recording – is beautifully done. **Richard Lawrence**

Rossini

Le Comte Ory

Philippe Talbot *ten* Comte Ory

Julie Fuchs *sop* Adèle

Michele Pertusi *bass* Tutor

Gaëlle Arquez *mez* Isolier

Jean-Sébastien Bou *bar* Raimbaud

Éve-Maud Hubeaux *mez* Ragonde

Jodie Devos *sop* Alice

Patrick Bolleire *bass* Governor

Les Éléments; Orchestre des Champs-Élysées /

Louis Langrée

Stage director Denis Podalydès

Video director Vincent Massip

C Major Entertainment ® DVD 747408;

® Blu-ray 747504 (150' • NTSC • 1080i • 16:9 •

DTS-HD MA5.1, DTS5.1 & PCM stereo • 0 • s)

Recorded live at the Opéra Comique, Paris,

December 27 & 29, 2017

Includes synopsis



Rossini's sublimely amusing late comedy *Le Comte Ory* is very much a game of two halves, the second act

being a cunningly contrived variant of the first. Here, in this recent Paris staging, it is the second act which delights rather more than the first.

The eponymous philanderer's first attempt to seduce the wife of an absent crusader knight is meant to take place outdoors in the lea of the Countess's castle where Ory has set up shop as an itinerant guru. Here director Denis Podalydès and designer Éric Ruf move us into a small church where Ory holds court amid a clutter of chairs, confessional box, pulpit and caretaker's closet. This Ory also goes largely undisguised: an odd stratagem for a wanted man whose pursuers are hardly likely to be fooled by a judicial wig and false nose. Nor is Act 1, with its milling crowd scenes, especially well staged. Much of the acting is under-directed – never a good thing when there are close-up cameras on the prowl – nor is there much rhythm to the stage business.

In Act 2, which takes place inside the castle, everything is better done. Ory is effectively disguised as the amplest of nuns, while the Cistercian simplicity of the castle hall offers an ideal acting space. The orchestra pit doubles as the imagined cellar, from which the roistering nuns (*soi-disant*) haul up their cache of vintage wines, and the great nocturnal Trio for Ory, the Countess and Ory's page Isolier is beautifully played on a discreetly lit plinth that doubles as the love-nest. Musically, too, the Trio is finely done.

The Opéra Comique's Francophone cast is led by Julie Fuchs's sweet-toned Countess, with Gaëlle Arquez as the sporty young blade Isolier, and Philippe Talbot as Ory. Talbot is excellent, though I can't understand why he muffles many of Ory's glistening high Cs. This is a period-instrument production deploying the excellent Orchestra des Champs-Élysées; yet, whatever may have been written to the contrary, the original Ory, Adolphe Nourrit, would have been a full-voiced performer in a recognisably modern style.

Conductor Louis Langrée first worked on Ory as an assistant to John Eliot Gardiner on his Lyon Opéra recording (Philips, 10/89 – nla). Again, Act 2 goes beautifully, where Act 1 is rather lacking in lift and continuity. The Tutor's set-



Philippe Talbot (Ory) and Gaëlle Arquez (Isolier) star in Rossini's *Le Comte Ory*

piece scene doesn't help, especially when, as here, the singer rather struggles to make it seem pertinent.

Of the several DVD rivals, it is the Zurich Opera staging by the A-list team of Leiser and Caurier, with Javier Camarena and Cecilia Bartoli in the leading roles, which continues to have pride of place. There the time-shift is not, as here, to the France of Rossini's time but to France in the 1950s; so it's from the Algerian wars, rather than the Crusades, that the all too susceptible womenfolk await their husbands' return. The Zurich production also uses period instruments but is even better conducted. **Richard Osborne**

Selected comparison:

Tang (8/14) (DECC) DVD 074 3467DH; Blu-ray 074 3468DH

Weber

Der Freischütz

Julia Kleiter *sop* Agathe
Michael König *ten* Max
Eva Liebau *sop* Aennchen
Günther Groissböck *bass* Caspar
Michael Kraus *bar* Ottokar
Stephen Milling *bass* Hermit
Frank van Hove *bass* Cuno/Samiel's Voice
Till von Orlosky *bar* Kilian
Chorus and Orchestra of La Scala, Milan / Myung-Whun Chung

Stage director **Matthias Hartmann**

Video director **Jean-Pierre Loisl**

Naxos (F) DVD 2 110597; (F) Blu-ray NBD0092V
 (135' • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080i • DTS-HD5.1, DTS5.1 & PCM stereo • 0 • s)

Recorded live, October 13 & 17, 2017

Includes synopsis



Weber's *Der Freischütz* rarely gets productions outside of Germany and Austria, so Matthias Hartmann's 2017 staging

for La Scala, Milan, is welcome. Or at least it would be did it not fall between two stools of what it wants to be. Costumes point to a traditional approach, albeit with outsize hats and a silly bow for Aennchen (making her even more annoying a character than usual), while Raimund Orfeo Voigt's set features neon tubing to depict buildings. When displayed full-screen on this DVD, they flicker distractingly. I do hope this is a camera side-effect and not something that plagued the Milanese audience.

Happily, the opera's darker scenes are neon-free, with charred trees framing the Wolf's Glen, where Günther Groissböck's

scar-faced Caspar summons the devil (Samiel, the Black Huntsman) to forge the seven magic bullets on which the plot rests. There are plenty of pyrotechnics here, and red demons writhing in the forest while Myung-Whun Chung fires up the La Scala orchestra to aurally depict the supernatural horrors Max witnesses. Groissböck is the star of the show, his muscular bass perfect for the role of the tortured forester in league with the devil. His black aria 'Schweig! damit dich niemand warnt' is tremendously dispatched. Michael König isn't a natural actor but he has the heft for Max's aria 'Durch die Wälder'.

Julia Kleiter is a lovely Agathe, whose hand in marriage is up for grabs in the shooting contest. 'Leise, leise, fromme Weise' is gorgeously shaped. Eva Liebau is a lyric soprano Aennchen rather than a pesky coloratura but Hartmann makes her character rather ridiculous, as he does the bridesmaids in the chorus where they bring the bridal wreath (which an imp fireballs to turn into a charred funerary wreath instead).

Chung conducts a clean account that has plenty of drama where it is required, while the villager scenes have bounce and charm. If only the production knew what it wanted. **Mark Pullinger**

SOUNDCRASH PRESENTS

SONGLINES

MUSIC AWARDS

CEREMONY 2019



HOSTED BY

**CERY'S
MATTHEWS**

FEATURING PERFORMANCES FROM
WINNERS AND NOMINEES

EARTH HALL 30TH NOV 2019

TICKETS & INFO VIA SOUNDCRASHMUSIC.COM

The Editors of Gramophone's sister music magazines, Jazzwise and Songlines, recommend some of their favourite recordings from the past month

Jazz

Brought to you by **jazzwise**

Alicia Olatuja

Intuition: Songs From The Minds Of Women
Resilience Music © RMA007



Vocalist Olatuja was a standout performer on pianist-arranger Billy Childs' acclaimed Laura Nyro tribute *Map To The Treasure*, but this album shows her ability to front a covers project that also has an ambitious premise. As the subtitle states, Olatuja celebrates women composers, and casts the net far and wide, stylistically speaking. That means that Western pop staples such as Sade's 'No Ordinary Love' share the spotlight with the classic Chilean folk of Violeta Parra's 'Gracias A La Vida'. Olatuja's re-imaginings are tastefully done each time. Backed by an excellent coterie of musicians, of which drummer-producer Ulysses Owens impresses, she brings a

harmonic sheen to the material without encroaching upon the spirit of each piece. No greater example of this is the wholly sensitive recasting of Joni Mitchell's 'Cherokee Louise', an essential denunciation of abuse and racism. Olatuja's deeply soulful delivery and nuanced phrasing are consistently impressive on these songs. 'Just Wait', the one original she contributes, is excellent and bodes well for more of her own writing if she should be so inclined in the future. **Kevin Le Gendre**

Jeremy Pelt

The Artist
High Note © HCD7325



Trumpeter Jeremy Pelt's blendings of tight Jazz Messengers-like themes with the free flow of Miles Davis's second

great quintet are documented by annual spring releases for New York's High Note label. His latest release, a commission for the Festival of New Trumpet Music, smooths the grooves with layers of guitar, vibraphone and effects. The initial inspiration was sculpture displayed at the Musée Rodin, Paris. 'L'Appel Aux Armes' is brought to life as a slow burn from solo piano to triumphant trumpet high, 'Dignity and Despair (Burghers of Calais)' and 'I Sol Tace (Gates of Hell)' are captured with spacious rhythms and sustained trumpet blasts and the gentle undulations of 'Epilogue', an imagining of what Rodin would sculpt today, follow the brief and winsome 'Camille Claudel'. Pelt's tonal control and sharp-suited lines stand out, and band mainstays, pianist Victor Gould and bassist Vincente Archer, are equally assured. **Mike Hobart**

World Music

Brought to you by **SONGLINES**

AKA Trio

Joy
bendigidig © BEND12



Three continents, one album, 10 mellifluous performances. Those are the basic figures of AKA Trio; Italy's Antonio Forcione, Senegal's Seckou Keita, and Brazil's Adriano Adewale combine their masteries of guitar, kora, voice and percussion. They've performed on and off together for eight years, and convened in Master Chord Studios in London to write and improvise these 10 nuggets of *Joy*. The opening title-track came from a jam session, while each member stirs songs into the pot for the group to wield their combined virtuosity, without ever overdoing, overplaying or straying from the songs' core architectures.

For all the joy, there is a fair weight of yearning too, in songs such as Keita's 'Kanou' (Love) and Adewale's 'Midnight Blooming' and 'Saudade', each of which spring from the far end of love affairs. But their dark nights of the soul seem to float above this music like banks of early summer cumulus. Keita's 'Uncle Solo' is a tribute to his uncle, the great kora player Jali Solo Cissokho, and there's a paean to 'The Beautiful Game' of football in Adewale's evocation of Brazil with Pelé. **Tim Cumming**

Kathryn Tickell & The Darkening

Hollowbone
Resilient Records © RES007



Hollowbone includes 'Morpeth', a version of a tune in the oldest manuscript of British pipe music, and 'Colliers' one

of the oldest mining songs. There is also 'Darlington', an anonymous children's rhyme, and 'Aboot the Bush', an ancient and strange dialect song. Such repertoire is not surprising; smallpipe and fiddle player Tickell has constantly mined the musical traditions of Northumbria since she released her first album, aged 17, in 1984.

But on 'Morpeth', Tickell's Northumbrian smallpipes flutter like a seabird over waves of percussion churning like an ominous sea. In the opener 'O-U-T Spells Out', counting and skipping games are whispered over fast percussion and synth breaks. There are references here to hagstones (rocks with naturally occurring holes) and hollowbones, used in shamanistic rites to allow the ancestors to speak to the present. And that is exactly what Kathryn Tickell & The Darkening are doing here. **Julian May**

Gramophone, Jazzwise and Songlines are published by MA Music, Leisure & Travel, home to the world's best specialist music magazines. To find out more, visit gramophone.co.uk, jazzwisemagazine.com and songlines.co.uk

REISSUES & ARCHIVE

Our monthly guide to the most exciting catalogue releases, historic issues and box-sets

SEIJI OZAWA • 104

ROB COWAN'S REPLAY • 110

ROBERT CASADESUS • 106

CLASSICS RECONSIDERED • 112

BOX-SET ROUND-UP • 109

Seiji Ozawa's complete recordings for DG

Andrew Farach-Colton seeks out the gems in a variable collection of a huge legacy

I was born and raised in Boston, so I feel as if I grew up with Seiji Ozawa, musically speaking. Yet reading *Absolutely on Music* (Harvill Secker: 2016, reviewed in November 2016), Haruki Murakami's conversations with Ozawa, I was struck by a fresh revelation: the conductor is not a musician who's driven by deep intellectual curiosity. Indeed, it's the novelist who comes across as the more musically thoughtful – and voraciously so. There's no question that Ozawa is immensely gifted but the interviews make clear that his approach to music is essentially of the nuts-and-bolts variety. This perspective kept coming back to me as I listened through this hefty box in which Ozawa's overarching concern with sound – its clarity, colour and texture – is ever-apparent.

Ozawa began recording in the mid-1960s and had made more than two dozen LPs before DG picked him up in 1972 (probably through Karajan, who was mentoring the young conductor in the first decades of his career). Many of the early recordings he made for EMI and RCA are dazzling in their vitality and sonic brilliance. In comparison, the three discs he made for DG with the San Francisco Symphony, where he served as Music Director (1970-77) before taking the reins in Boston, are rather less impressive. The orchestra sounds disciplined and alert but the performances feel oddly impatient. Best of the lot are the Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story* – perhaps reflecting the years Ozawa spent as Leonard Bernstein's assistant in New York.

Of course, the vast majority of the box is devoted to the 29 years he spent with the Boston Symphony. Indeed, of the 50 discs here, 36 were made with the orchestra – and, it should be noted, all of these were recently reissued as part of DG's 57-CD BSO box (11/18). There

are some spectacular examples of Ozawa's technical prowess. The first disc they recorded for DG in early 1973, of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, features a memorably picturesque 'Scène aux champs', at once clear yet marvellously atmospheric and structurally cogent. There's a *Daphnis et Chloé* from 1975 that abounds with exquisite woodwind solos and superfine string-playing. The 'Danse guerrière' in Part 2 is explosive yet wonderfully articulate, and 'Daybreak' is breathtakingly diaphanous – one can almost feel the dewy moisture in the morning mist. In Ives's Fourth Symphony, recorded the following year, Ozawa fashions the thorny complexities of the symphony into a mesmeric sonic tapestry.

Ozawa had been purposely moving the orchestra from the distinctively French accent it had acquired under Monteux and Munch to a more Germanic style

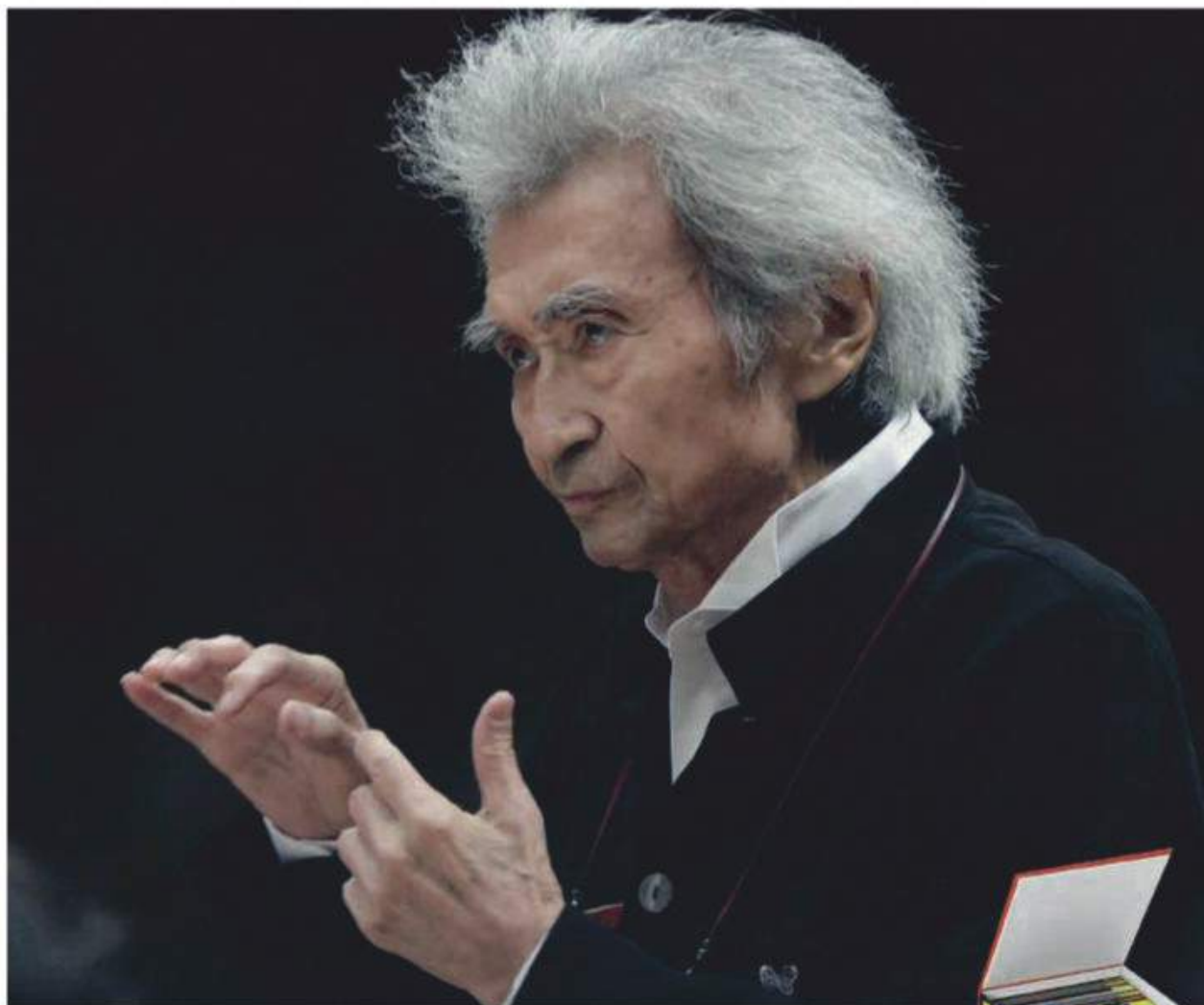
I can't say there are very many wholly satisfying interpretations, however. Even the aforementioned performances have their disappointments. Berlioz's ball scene is flat-footed. The Ives, though abstractly beautiful, entirely misses the music's visionary and raucous sides. And although the orchestra manage Ozawa's breakneck tempo in *Daphnis*'s final dance, it's more of a sprint than a dance of wild, triumphant abandon.

The unqualified successes include two discs of Respighi. Ozawa's Roman Trilogy is kaleidoscopic and surprisingly effective for being rendered so elegantly (particularly the gaudy *Roman Festivals*), while the three suites of *Ancient Airs and*

Dances are irresistible in their combination of delicacy and sumptuousness. His light touch is ideally suited to Mendelssohn's incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the enchantment is greatly enhanced by Dame Judi Dench's English narration. A confidently relaxed 1976 recording of Rossini's *Semiramide* Overture was new to me and one of many examples of the collective virtuosity of the BSO's string section, although the whole of it is a frothy delight (note the wonderfully spongy brass-playing).

Reading through old *Gramophone* reviews of Ozawa's recordings it's curious how the word 'balletic' frequently pops up. And, in fact, Ozawa can be a terrific ballet conductor. I retain great fondness for his stylish *Swan Lake*, for example. His recordings of large-scale dramatic works – like Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann* or Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust* and *Roméo et Juliette* in this set – often lack dramatic heft, but this *Swan Lake* conveys a vivid sense of the theatre. And Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* is nearly as fine. Ozawa takes a more restrained approach than, say, Maazel (Decca, 9/73), but his pacing feels spot-on, and there's a radiance to the playing (and recording) that's quite special.

With such a fine *Swan Lake*, it's perplexing that his *Nutcracker* is such a disappointment, the rhythms relaxed to the point of somnolence. On the other hand, the rhythms in the suite from the Offenbach-Rosenthal ballet *Gaité parisienne* are clutched so tightly, and the music driven so hard, that there's no charm whatsoever. Sadly, there are quite a few such duds in this collection: a glutinous *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*; a luxurious but over-refined *Sheherazade* (far less exciting than either his youthful RCA recording with the Chicago Symphony or a later version for Philips with the VPO); a live account of the Franck Symphony



Seiji Ozawa: an overarching concern with sound

that's maddeningly nonchalant; and a heavy-handed programme of Fauré from 1986 where Ozawa seems to be trying to transform Fauré into a German composer.

In fact, Ozawa had been purposely moving the orchestra from the distinctively French accent it had acquired under Monteux and Munch to a more Germanic style. 'Maybe three or four years after I stepped in', Ozawa tells Murakami, 'the sound changed – to the clear, concentrated German style I call "into the strings". The players put the bow in deep. It makes for a heavier sound. Until then the Boston sound was always light and beautiful.' Ozawa's shift ultimately prompted the resignation of Joseph Silverstein, the orchestra's silver-toned leader, in 1984. (André Previn called Silverstein 'the greatest concertmaster in the world', adding: 'That's not an opinion. That's a fact.')

Why, then, did DG have Ozawa record so much French music and so little German repertory? Of the many concerts I saw him conduct, one of the best was a Beethoven Seventh from the mid-'80s; its visceral sense of inevitability has stuck in my memory. Here, all we have are the aforementioned Mendelssohn incidental music, a muscular Beethoven *Emperor* Concerto with Christoph Eschenbach, two Brahms symphonies – a spacious, affectionate Second and a handsomely sleek First – and a stylish pair of Mozart wind concertos featuring BSO principals. The Mozart is a gem. I was reared on Harold



Wright's liquid, velvety tone and his playing in the Clarinet Concerto remains my touchstone

Ozawa recorded with Karajan's Berlin Philharmonic, too, though what's documented here is largely disappointing. He buffs Tchaikovsky's Fourth and Fifth Symphonies to a high sheen; and while some fast tempos create superficial excitement, neither reading conveys even the barest hint of risk or danger. His genteel and prettified cycle of the seven Prokofiev symphonies completely mystifies me, aside from an ardently lyrical Fourth. A live performance of *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* is tauter than his earlier studio version from Boston, and capped by an invigoratingly caffeinated finale. But while I admire Wolfram Christ's magisterial playing in the coupled

Viola Concerto, I find the pervasive aura of luxuriousness stylistically off-centre. How ironic, given Ozawa's predilections, that one of the box's most valuable recordings was made with the Orchestre National de France – a searing reading of Honegger's *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher*.

The remaining concerto recordings are yet another mixed bag. My colleague Bryce Morrison was wowed by Yundi Li in Prokofiev's Second and Ravel's G major (5/08). I find Li's playing rather heartless, and it's shocking to hear Ozawa and the Berliners scrambling to keep up in the Ravel's finale. Anne-Sophie Mutter's overwrought reading of the Bartók Second is also not to my taste but here, at least, Ozawa and the BSO maintain a firm grip. Perlman's disc of Berg and Stravinsky is spoiled by crude spotlighting of the solo violin and soggy orchestral playing in the Stravinsky.

In the positive column, we have Trevor Pinnock's fluent reading of Poulenc's *Concert champêtre* accompanied by Ozawa with delectable point and lightness. Simon Preston's electrifying account of the Organ Concerto is finer still, as the excitement comes without any sacrifice in the music's Gothic splendour. And then we come to Krystian Zimerman. In the Liszt concertos, he and Ozawa's shared concern for detail and refinement brings welcome freshness to these warhorses. And they're perfectly in sync again in the first two Rachmaninov concertos – incendiary performances that sweep one along on an intoxicating musical journey. It's a stunning disc and one that belongs in every serious collection.

I haven't heard all of the recordings compiled in Philips' 50-disc Ozawa box but I'll go out on a limb and say it's probably the more satisfying set, simply because it features the Saito Kinen Orchestra. Ozawa has done some of his best work with that hand-picked orchestra, and we get none of that here. Then again, if I were in charge at Universal, I'd ask Murakami – who seems to have given careful study to Ozawa's complete discography – to curate a selection of the conductor's finest recordings. I'll wager it would give us the best of both worlds. **G**

THE RECORDINGS

Seiji Ozawa: The Complete Recordings on Deutsche Grammophon

DG © (50 discs) 483 6484

A pianist of elegance: Robert Casadesus

Jed Distler revisits one of France's most stylish pianists courtesy of Sony Classical

Outside France, Robert Casadesus (1899-1972) was arguably the best-known French pianist of his generation, one whose artistry has long warranted extensive representation on CD. To be sure, there have been substantial reissue efforts in the past, from Sony France's extensive 'Casadesus Edition' to Scribendum's recent 30-CD retrospective. Sony Classical's 'Complete Columbia Album Collection', however, brings us the most comprehensive authorised Casadesus project to date.

The collection's 65 CDs encompass Casadesus's complete CBS Masterworks recordings, spanning from 1941 to 1969, together with a pair of 1960 and 1964 recitals first issued on LP by the Association Robert Casadesus, plus all the CBS and RCA Victor releases involving his wife Gaby and son Jean. Each volume is packaged in an original LP jacket facsimile, numbered more or less chronologically by initial LP release date (78rpm outliers that escaped long-playing format occupy Vols 1 and 2).

An accompanying 186-page booklet includes an essay by Olivier Bellamy, all known recording dates and venues, an index of works by composers and complete catalogue number listings for the original 78s and LPs. The producer Robert Russ discusses anomalies, discrepancies and errors in documentation with his customary thoroughness. One noticeable rectification concerns Debussy's *Préludes* Book 2, which Casadesus recorded in 1945, not 1954, as some sources indicate. Similar care informs Sony's exemplary restorations from the best possible disc, lacquer and tape sources. The items with Charles Munch and George Szell appear in the same superior transfers used for Sony's earlier complete album collections respectively devoted to these two conductors.

Pianophiles will notice the absence of Casadesus's 1928-38 British Columbia 78s. Apparently the 1961 Beethoven *Emperor* Concerto with Hans Rosbaud and the Concertgebouw Orchestra, issued by Philips, was also off limits, although it did turn up on LP in the US via CBS's budget Odyssey label.

In discussing various keyboard schools and traditions, the American critic Harold C Schonberg called French pianism a kind of 'frozen history', characterised by its elegance, facility and tendency towards shallow tone and fast tempos. It would be

overly simplistic to characterise Casadesus's artistry as such, yet these words readily apply to much of his justly celebrated 1951 Ravel cycle. Young pianists can learn from his refined workmanship, evenness of touch and discreet pedalling, even if today's interpretative zeitgeist favours more scorching and dynamically charged interpretations of *Gaspard's* 'Scarbo'. Both 1947 and 1960 accounts of the Concerto for the Left Hand with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra are reference-worthy, although it's hard to choose between the remake's opulent stereophony and the mono version's more gracefully animated *Allegro* march.

Young pianists can learn from Casadesus's refined workmanship, evenness of touch and discreet pedalling

The fact that Casadesus knew and worked with Ravel adds a shroud of authenticity to these interpretations, yet I personally find Casadesus's Debussy more stimulating. Instead of the 'piano without hammers' paradigm defining Walter Gieseking's hazy shimmer, Casadesus evokes mallets and mallet instruments of every shape and size. In *Préludes* Book 1, this helps to diffuse the static impression one often gleams from the whole-tone harmony of 'Voiles', or to transform the amorphous flakes of 'The snow is dancing' into dulcet droplets. Casadesus resists the common temptation to prettify and round off cadences in 'Estampes'. As a result, his bracingly clear articulation projects Debussy's polyrhythmic interplay in the guise of bold etchings rather than soft pastels. Likewise, in *Préludes* Book 2, you'll rarely hear the runs crackle and scintillate in 'Feux d'artifice' with Casadesus's effortless control, and that climactic glissando is timed to perfection. Regarding timing, Robert and Gaby Casadesus bring to *En blanc et noir* the most subtle and flexible synchronicity you'll ever hear in this piece. I prefer the alluringly distant patina of their 1954 mono recording over the closer, slightly harsher-sounding 1963 stereo remake.

Neither of the New York Philharmonic Saint-Saëns Fourth Concerto recordings is ideal. On one hand you have the stereo Bernstein's bloated, overly resonant

engineering and occasionally loose orchestral chording. On the other hand, muffled, constricted sound does poor justice to Artur Rodzinski's more disciplined support and Casadesus's relatively nimbler solo work. However, for the Dimitri Mitropoulos/New York synergy at white heat, go to the third movement of Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* and hear them light firecrackers under their esteemed soloist, temporarily breaking his aristocratic cool! Then again, there's glitter aplenty in the Liszt A major Concerto with Szell: a pity that Casadesus otherwise steered clear of this composer in the studio.

By contrast, Casadesus's Chopin and Schumann interpretations are impressively patrician and Classically orientated, rather than memorably ardent and Romantic. In other words, don't expect Horowitz's demonic persona, Rubinstein's red-blooded phrasing or Richter's range of colour (although Casadesus's sensitive and poetic support graces the baritone Pierre Bernac's glorious rendering of *Dichterliebe*). However, the crisp articulation and expressive straightforwardness of Casadesus's solo Bach, Scarlatti and Rameau stick with you. Among Bach's multi-keyboard concertos, the C major BWV1064 comes off best, especially vis-à-vis the graceful give and take with which Robert, Gaby and Jean imbue the finale's three-piano polyphony.

Bellamy's booklet essay delves into Casadesus's close association with Mozart, whose music predominates in the pianist's discography. There's never a question of style, taste and concision, although some listeners may miss the rhythmic and tonal inflections, operatic inferences and apt embellishments that distinguished Rudolf Serkin's contemporaneous recordings. The K467 Concerto presents one tell-tale example, where Casadesus eschews the improvisational fill-ins we've long come to expect from Mozartians. It's fascinating to compare the pianist's 1940, 1956 and 1964 versions of the F major Sonata, K332: the earliest has the most dynamic contrast, the middle one is more elegant and rounded, while the final traversal is on the dry side. The stereo Mozart concerto recordings with Szell still stand the test of time with their exquisite cultivation, chamber-like aesthetic and perfectly judged tempos. Conversely, Casadesus the unabashed show-off lets loose in his 1941 *Eine kleine Gigue* recording, where his rapid-transit pacing



Robert Casadesus, here with his pianist wife, Gaby, and Eugene Ormandy



and ironclad control vivify Mozart's playful rhythmic displacements.

Collectors familiar with the Apollonian poise of Walter Gieseking or Solomon in Beethoven's concertos will find a like-minded spirit in Casadesus's First and Fourth, although his original cadenzas are rather superficial in their emphasis on passagework and lack of palpable development. But his New York/Mitropoulos *Emperor* Concerto positively rocks in the outer movements. He is one of the few pianists who manages to project the first-movement second subject's harmonic felicities while retaining a steady tempo: easier said than done! And Casadesus is anything but a lightweight in the sonatas. The *Appassionata* finale explodes from the start and doesn't let up, while the pianist emerges from *Les adieux*'s gnarly passagework proudly untangled. His somewhat clipped and contained phrasing of Op 78's rollicking finale and Op 2 No 2's outer movements evokes and often surpasses Wilhelm Kempff's similar conceptions. The Op 110 Sonata may lack breadth and ecstatic sweep, yet what beautiful voicing of the contrapuntal strands Casadesus achieves.

Beethoven is at the centre of the pianist's extensive and splendid collaborations with the violinist Zino Francescatti, with whom he recorded five of the 10 violin sonatas in mono and the entire cycle in stereo. The main differences between mono and stereo versions concern sonics: the mono miking is blended and slightly diffuse; the later recordings are analytically close up with marked stereo separation. The duo also 'let go' more often in the earlier readings, such as in the A minor Op 23 Rondo main theme's momentary accelerations and the *Kreutzer* Sonata variation movement's subtle modifications of the basic pulse. You'll rarely hear a more intelligent and proportioned Franck Sonata than in their 1947 recording, where the musicians' *alla breve* phrasing of the fourth movement imparts a conversational flow to the imitative writing and prevents any chance of bombast in the coda. Their 1953 Fauré sonatas transcend mere charm and elegance by virtue of the duo's large-scale approach and keen harmonic awareness.

The Robert and Gaby Casadesus duo partnership was a happy marriage both personally and musically, and their Debussy, Fauré, Chabrier and Satie recordings remain in a class by themselves. The pianists also make the best possible case for Florent Schmitt's rarely heard *Trois Rapsodies* and *Une semaine du petit elfe Ferme-l'œil*. Their distinction as Schubertians previously

eluded me. Rehearing their recordings, I'm more aware of the team's fastidious balancing of melody and accompaniment in the F minor Fantasy's *Allegro vivace*, or how their minuscule tempo adjustments in the final peroration give depth and dimension to writing that can sound clattery in the wrong hands. And I newly appreciate the perfect contouring between the *primo fiorituri* and the *secondo* tenor voice in the *Andantino variée*'s sublime final variation. One also must mention the tragically short-lived (he was 44) Jean Casadesus's Debussy *Préludes* Book 1 (softer-grained than those of his father), his contrastingly bracing, hard-edged Chabrier recital and his exuberant live Beethoven

Third Piano Concerto with Mitropoulos.

Lastly, the collection gives ample due to Casadesus the composer. It's not surprising that he writes idiomatically and effectively for his instrument, yet mastery of orchestration and skill for deploying instruments must not be underestimated. The finale of his Piano Concerto No 2 might be likened to a gentle samba, where piano and first-desk soloists assiduously intermingle and the textures grow thicker without cluttering, like Milhaud and Villa-Lobos at their best. The *Sextuor* and *Nonetto* are jam-packed with creative and rambunctious ideas, and the Second Violin Sonata's leaping melodic explorations keep your ears alert. I'm especially fond of the *Hommage à Chausson* for violin and piano, an eight-minute work that alternates tersely lyrical sections with rapid, quicksilver ensemble interplay.

One cannot ask for more, except for a similar project gathering all of the Casadesus family's non-CBS/RCA Victor recordings under one roof. In all, the present collection's wide repertoire range and overall artistic excellence offer much to discover and digest. Buy it while you can (it'll set you back about £200), which means sooner rather than too late. **G**

THE RECORDING

Robert Casadesus: The Complete Columbia Album Collection

Sony Classical © (65 discs) 19075 85365-2

ELOQUENCE



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

BUY | DOWNLOAD | STREAM

NEW RELEASES



CAVALLI:
L'Ormindo
Raymond Leppard
Decca 482 9382 (2CD)



CAVALLI:
La Calisto
Raymond Leppard
Decca 482 9400 (2CD)



RAMEAU:
Hippolyte et Aricie
Anthony Lewis
Decca 482 9394 (2CD)



HERBERT:
**Cello Concertos;
Operetta Spectacular**
Lynn Harrell; Neville
Marriner; Camarata
Decca 482 7305 (2CD)



NIELSEN:
**Symphonies
Nos. 3 & 5**
François
Huybrechts;
Paul Kletzki
Decca 482 8570



**The Organ at
Sydney Opera
House**
Peter Hurford
Decca 484 0351



Ponchielli:
La Gioconda
Gianandrea
Gavazzeni
Decca 482 8597 (2CD)



**Anita Cerquetti
Recital**
Anita Cerquetti
Decca 482 8601



**Graziella Sciutti:
A Portrait**
Graziella Sciutti
Decca 482 9637

FORTHCOMING



**Berlioz: Les Nuits
d'été; Chants de
la France**
Lucie Daullene;
Joseph Canteloube /
Suzanne Danco
Decca 482 8586



**Vienna, Women
and Song**
Renate Holm;
Werner Krenn;
Anton Paulik
Decca 484 0156 (2CD)



**Clair de Lune
Waldteufel
Waltzes**
Raymond Agoult;
Douglas Gamley
Decca 482 7339 (2CD)



**The Last Night
of the Proms:
1969, 1971, 1972
Highlights**
Sir Colin Davis
Decca 482 9370 (2CD)



**Carmina
Burana:
A Medieval
Collection**
Philip Pickett
Decca 482 7315 (4CD)



**Stravinsky,
Bartók:
Ballet Music**
Lorin Maazel;
Christoph
von Dohnányi
Decca 484 0180 (2CD)

www.EloquenceClassics.com

 /EloquenceClassics

BOX-SET *Round-up*

Rob Cowan offers a personal round-up of some worthwhile CD bargains

Small is beautiful', 'less is more', 'the master manifests himself through restriction': these and similar pearls of wisdom sit at the hub of the Baroque string specialist Sigiswald Kuijken's subtle art. Accent's two

sets of **Concertos** and **Chamber Music** feature among their voluminous contents Kuijken's latest thoughts on Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* (two versions preceded them) where he uses the *cello da spalla* – a small cello played braced against the shoulder – which lends a brighter, more transparent texture at the bass end of the sound spectrum than we often encounter. These performances by La Petite Bande are deft and responsive, and arranged across two discs in the order Nos 3, 5, 1, 4, 6 and 2. The Orchestral Suites are programmed on a 79-minute single CD, in the order 1, 3, 2 and 4, the main body of the Third Suite's Overture extremely vital, the Second Suite's closing Badinerie (where Barthold Kuijken plays transverse flute) vigorous rather than merely fast. Vivaldi is represented by a stylish account of *The Four Seasons*; again the approach trades all-too-familiar aggression for easefulness, with a couple of concertos added (including Vivaldi's take on *La follia*) and there are the flute concertos, the whole of Op 10 in particular falling delightfully on the ear. Telemann is represented by concertos for horn and trumpet and a disc of concertos and suites, Kuijken and his team relishing the master's quirkiness without hamming up the jokes. The two Haydn CDs are undoubted highlights, one featuring Symphonies Nos 6-8, the other the Harpsichord Concertos in G and F (Ewald Demeyere) and a Divertimento in F. As with a programme of early Mozart (Cassations, K63 and 99, and Divertimento, K205), Kuijken and his players provide a flavoursome musical feast to savour again and again. The recordings date from between 2006 and 2016.

Mention of the viola-like *cello da spalla* brings me to the six Bach Cello Suites rigorously dispatched on that instrument by Kuijken and included in an Accent retrospective of Kuijken family chamber music recordings from between 1978 and



2007. Programmes of English and late French viol music (Dollé and Forqueray), music for two viols and sensitively nuanced accounts of Couperin's *Les nations* (with Robert Kohnen playing the harpsichord) and Rameau's *Pièces de clavecin en concerts* join selections of Corelli's Op 5 (including his famous take on the *Follia* melody) and a programme of German Baroque chamber music (Telemann, JS and CPE Bach). As for Classical repertoire, Mozart's flute quartets, beautifully done, and the major Mozart sonatas for fortepiano and violin enjoy forthright reportage from Kuijken and Luc Devos, though Vol 1 of the

In Haydn, Kuijken and his players provide a flavoursome musical feast to savour again and again

sonatas from Isabelle Faust and Alexander Melnikov (Harmonia Mundi, 11/18) promises to set new standards in the 'period' approach for this repertoire. But perhaps the Classical highlights are by Haydn, bright, animated and keenly pointed accounts of the Flute Quartets, Op 5, the Trios, Op 38, and various other works, a joy to listen to, all of them, and sensitively balanced sound-wise. The beauty of this particular set, or most of it, is in its charm as a sophisticated 'easy' listen. Settle to it with your favourite bevvy and I guarantee it'll transport you to a world that's very much more civilised than the one we're living in at the moment.

In the purely musical sense **Pachelbel's Canon** needs no introduction but in the sense of 'a list of works' this prolific court musician (as he once was) explored most genres, his keyboard works being especially rich in attractive repertoire. Simone Stella has already given us the complete organ and harpsichord works of Buxtehude,

Böhm, Reincken, Walther and Froberger, all for Brilliant Classics, and now for the same label he adds the complete keyboard music of Pachelbel. *Magnificat* fugues, chorale preludes, chaconnes, variations, suites and other genres are all performed by Stella with natural flair, especially with respect to clarifying counterpoint. As to sampling, for the organ repertoire in the first instance I'd head for the *Magnificat sexti toni*, P326-35 (on disc 12), a sequence of 10 compact fugues that are totally unlike, or for the harpsichord works, on the first CD, the opening *Hexachordum Apollinis*, being various groups of airs with variations and an excellent introduction to Pachelbel's keyboard style overall.

Meaningful musical brevity, albeit with a popular slant, again presents itself in a generous medieval collection, **Die grossen Minnesänger**, devoted to the German courtly love song, with composers including Walther von der Vogelweide, Neidhart von Reuenthal and the so-called Monk of Salzburg. Also represented are troubadours and trouvères from the French and Spanish territories. The soloists and ensembles featured here include such early music specialists as Sabine Lutzenberger, Andrea von Ramm (a vintage representative of the tradition), I Ciarlatani, Ensemble für Frühe Musik Augsburg, Estampe, Per-Sonat and Ensemble Leones, among others. Well documented, with PDFs included on disc 3. I'd be surprised if once you start listening you'll find it easy to stop. Very moreish, and the sound is superb. **G**

THE RECORDINGS

Sigiswald Kuijken The Concertos

Accent © 10 ACC24352

Sigiswald Kuijken The Chamber Music

Accent © (20 discs) ACC24351

Pachelbel Cpte Kybd Wks Stella

Brilliant Classics © 13 95623

Die Grossen Minnesänger

Christophorus © 11 CHR77432

REPLAY

Rob Cowan's monthly survey of historic reissues and archive recordings



Mostly major maestros

Among the many first-time releases that excited our senses in the 1960s and '70s when the **Arturo Toscanini Society** launched a series of LPs was a February 1941 NBC broadcast of Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* that topped virtually any rival for spirit, intensity, heroic bravura and, in 'Des Helden Friedenswerke' and 'Des Helden Weltflucht und Vollendung', an ardently singing line. In short, it was everything one hoped it might be, and Pristine Audio's newly refurbished transfer reignites that sense of excitement, especially with respect to the percussion in 'Des Helden Walstatt', which now sounds clearer than ever before. Another boon is the (uncredited) violinist Mischa Mischakoff's virtuoso portrayal of 'Des Helden Gefährtin': terrific playing by any standards.

Ein Heldenleben reappears as part of an all-Strauss set, from which only the white-hot Dance of the Seven Veils (January 1939; issued as part of 'Arturo Toscanini: The Complete RCA Collection') is otherwise commercially available. Also from 1939 is a searing *Don Juan*, its central strings-and-horns conflagration erupting with maximum passion. *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* hails from 1946 and is less impressive, not for want of vitality but because some of the playing is below par. *Tod und Verklärung* from later the same year – though less vividly recorded than the 1952 RCA version – is magnificent, especially the closing section. Which leaves *Don Quixote*, a distinctive 1938 broadcast featuring the great Emanuel Feuermann. I say 'great', though I personally feel that on this occasion the cellist's familiar seductive attributes of tonal velvet and eloquent phrasing aren't quite sufficient for this most human (and often cantankerous) of solo roles. For me, Fournier, Piatigorsky (especially under Charles Munch) and Rostropovich all dig deeper, not to mention Frank Miller on Toscanini's later RCA recording. As for the maestro himself, he alights on each episode with evident relish, and his orchestra, less than a year old at the time of recording, keeps every bar of the score fully alive. What rhythm, and what searing attack!

Toscanini in Russian fare is represented by Prokofiev's *Classical* Symphony in an all-bustling 1947 affair that's keener-edged than his 1951 RCA version; Shostakovich's First Symphony in a 1939 version more intense than the 1944 one for RCA; and two works by Kabalevsky: Symphony No 2 – the slow movement showing off the lyrical properties of the NBC SO's strings in 1942 – and a zappy 1943 account of the *Colas Breugnon* Overture. All the transfers are excellent.

Pristine also does well by **Serge Koussevitzky**, whose 1946 relays of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* Symphony and *Francesca da Rimini* play to the gallery while occasionally opting for outsize gestures, such as the massive rallentando one bar before letter H in the *Allegro vivo* section of the symphony's first movement. They have also reissued **Wilhelm Furtwängler's** 1951 Berlin Philharmonic *Pathétique* (broadcast from Cairo), where the same passage is driven without any such rhythmic impediment. Andrew Rose has released this wonderful performance on a prompt from a correspondent who pointed out, rightly in my view, that Furtwängler in 1951 delivered a *Pathétique* that was significantly more intense than his EMI Berlin recording from 1938. The roar of timpani that heats the first movement's cumulative climax is overwhelming, while elsewhere you imagine Furtwängler's heart affixed to a land less than 250 miles away from Cairo where survivors of the regime that he had served so unwillingly were residing. Fanciful? I think not. The same CD also includes a mesmerising wartime account of Schumann's Cello Concerto where Furtwängler and his players accompany the orchestra's wonderful lead cellist at the time, Tibor de Machula. Here the conducting, although frequently volatile, is at its best where darkening spectres visit the close of the slow movement, one of those magical transitions that suited Furtwängler's storm-tossed imagination to a T.

Max Fiedler was one of only two conductors to have recorded Brahms who had direct links with the composer himself. Having already reissued the four Brahms

works that he set down commercially, Pristine is now embarking on the release of various German radio recordings from 1936, some of them marginally incomplete. In Vol 1, Brahms's *Tragic Overture*, Mozart's Piano Concerto No 20 (with Lubka Kolessa) and Schumann's *Rhenish* Symphony are all shorn of tiny episodes – not enough to scupper an appreciation of the whole but a sure bar to untarnished enjoyment. All, plus a serviceable account of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* Suite, are with the Berlin Reichsenders Orchestra – good performances, with Kolessa in a playful mood in the Mozart. But the most imposing item on this generally well-transferred double-pack is with the Hamburg RSO: a massive account of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the last statement of the first movement's four-note motif drawn out to infinity. The slow movement is as majestic as any I've heard, and the sound is excellent. An interesting set, then, though more for the specialist than for the casual collector.

THE RECORDINGS



'Toscanini Conducts Richard Strauss'
Feuermann vc
NBC SO / Toscanini
Pristine Audio © ② PASC549



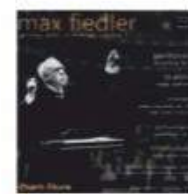
'Toscanini Conducts Contemporary Russian Music'
NBC SO / Toscanini
Pristine Audio © PASC548



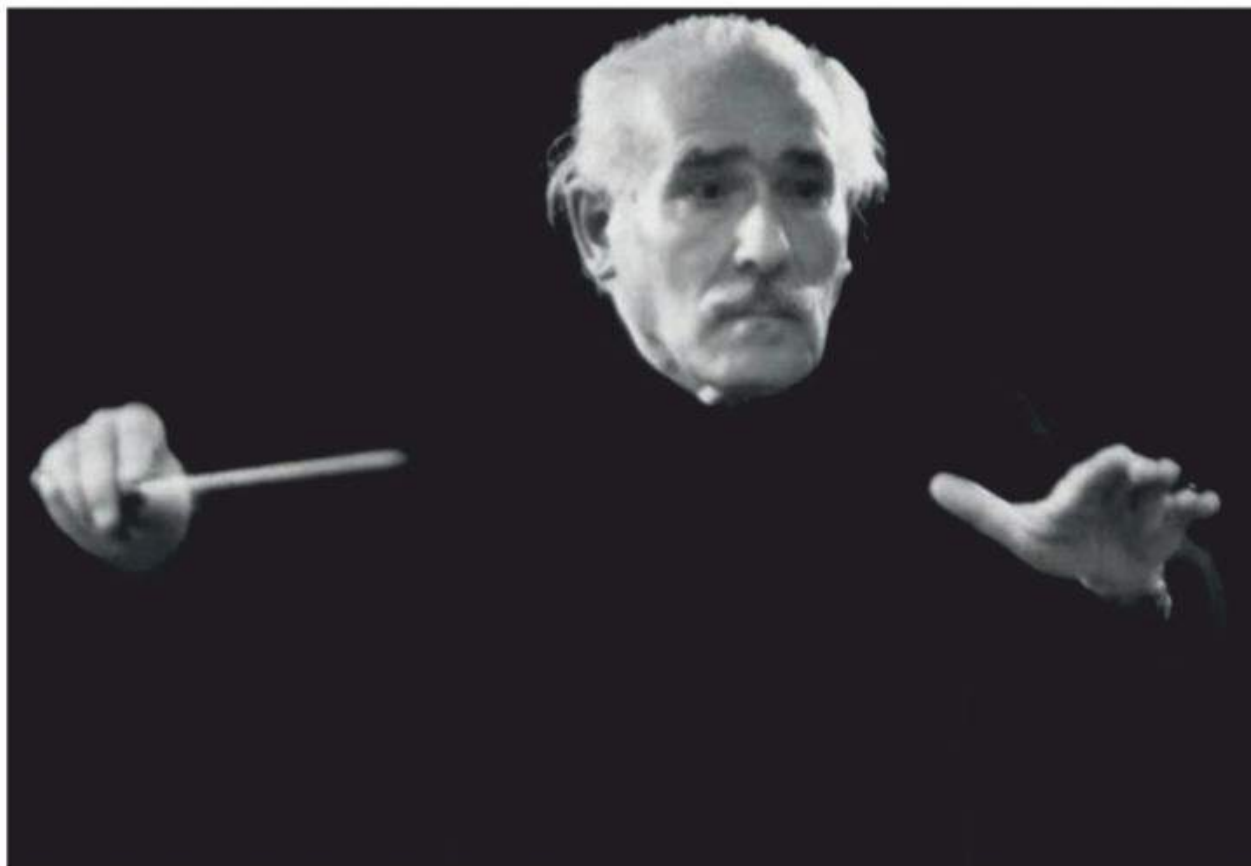
'Koussevitzky Conducts Tchaikovsky'
Boston SO / Koussevitzky
Pristine Audio © PASC550



'Furtwängler Conducts Schumann and Tchaikovsky'
De Machula vc
Berlin PO / Furtwängler
Pristine Audio © PASC545



'Max Fiedler: German Radio Recordings, Vol 1'
Kolessa pf Berlin Reichsenders Orch; Hamburg RSO / Fiedler
Pristine Audio © ② PASC547



Toscanini excels in Russian fare with the NBC SO for Pristine Audio – Prokofiev is 'all-bustling', Shostakovich 'intense'

The queen of cellists

Mention of Schumann's Cello Concerto brings me to a broadcast performance by Zara Nelsova (conducted by Georg Ludwig Jochum) in which warmth and emotional candour take the upper hand. The same collection also includes equally expressive performances of Beethoven's Cello Sonatas Nos 1, 2, 3 and 5, the two Brahms sonatas, the Bach Cello Suites Nos 2, 3 and 6 and, most memorably, Kodály's Solo Sonata, Op 8, the opening of which vies with János Starker (maybe even surpasses him) for intensity of attack. Bloch was another Nelsova speciality. She recorded *Schelomo* more than once: the version here, from 1954, is conducted by Ernest Ansermet and presented in tandem with its original Decca LP coupling, *Voice in the Wilderness*. Bloch himself is at the piano for the beautiful *From Jewish Life*. Another valuable composer-soloist collaboration is Barber's Cello Concerto, where the composer conducts, and there are works by Rachmaninov, Milhaud (First Concerto), Lalo, Saint-Saëns (First Concerto), Dvořák, Boccherini (Cello Sonata in A) and Reger. Nelsova was one of the finest instrumentalists of her generation; and although much of this material has been issued on CD before, it's good to have a generous sampling of her art available at such a reasonable price point.

THE RECORDING



Zara Nelsova:
The Cello Queen
Documents © 10 600475

The piano king

Followers of that most patrician of pianists Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli may already know of his *Emperor* Concerto given at the Vatican on April 28, 1960, where, heading towards the coda, there's a spot of audible divine intervention as lightning strikes and thunder rolls. That appears on Memoria ABM Divox 999001 as well as on Profil's collection of mixed live and studio recordings. Also from the Vatican, in 1962, Liszt's *Totentanz* (conductor Gianandrea Gavazzeni) relates an intimidating coldness, aristocratic but poised in the slower music and pianistically brilliant beyond description elsewhere. We're given an equally striking Concerto No 1 under Rafael Kubelík. The studio element includes famous shellac-derived recordings of the Bach-Busoni Chaconne and Brahms's *Paganini* Variations, the latter as presented in the pianist's edited text. Ravel's G major and Rachmaninov's Fourth concertos under Ettore Gracis are included, as are two versions of Schumann's *Faschingsschwank aus Wien*, the better-known hailing from London in 1957, whereas a 1955 Warsaw recording includes possibly the most rapturously beautiful account of the Intermezzo that I've ever heard. We're also lucky to have Mozart Concertos Nos 13, 15, 20 and 23, Haydn's D major, concertos by Schumann and Grieg, Franck's *Symphonic Variations* and solo works by Galuppi (especially wonderful), Bach, Beethoven, Debussy, Chopin, Mompou, Grieg and Ravel. The sound is generally good; and while duplication with other releases is inevitable, this set certainly serves as a potential 'essential' Michelangeli set.

THE RECORDING



Bach. Beethoven. Brahms.
Chopin. Debussy. Grieg. Liszt.
Mozart. Ravel. Schumann, etc
Michelangeli *pf et al*
Profil © 10 PH18063

Anatole Fistoulari conducts Tchaikovsky

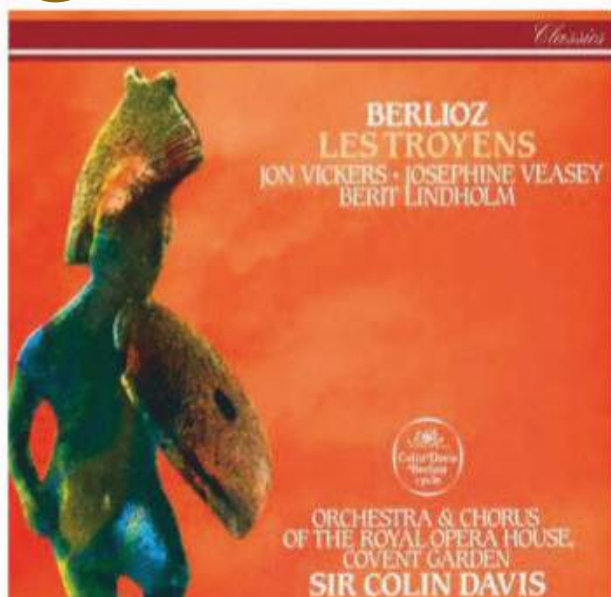
A little while ago, Australian Eloquence (ELQ482 5225) released a coupling of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* ballet (slightly abridged) with music from *The Nutcracker* (the standard 'divertissement' suite and a cobbled together 'second' suite). The conductor for these London and Paris mono sessions (LSO and Paris Conservatoire Orchestra) was Anatole Fistoulari, a gifted ballet maestro whose Paris recording of an abridged *The Sleeping Beauty* claims among its many virtues a keen sense of theatre, with excellent solo work from the violinist Pierre Nerini and cellist Roger Albin. To recap briefly, and necessarily, Fistoulari's stereo Concertgebouw Orchestra remake of *Swan Lake* highlights (with the violinist Steven Staryk and cellist Tibor de Machula, ELQ442 9032) is preferable to its predecessor, in spite of the presence of Alfredo Campoli playing the violin solos on the earlier recording. A recording from later still with the Netherlands Radio PO for Decca isn't quite up to the exalted level of the Concertgebouw disc. Fistoulari would also return to *The Sleeping Beauty* for a single-disc vinyl selection with the LSO, which, while worthy, lacks the drama of this Paris predecessor, a recording that easily justifies the modest asking price. The coupling is neither here nor there. Fistoulari's heavy-handed 1971 Phase 4 recording of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No 4 (RPO) suffers from distractingly polarised stereo sound and frequently tweaked dynamics, and can't begin to compete with the likes of Muti, Markevitch, Mravinsky, Dorati or the best of Karajan. Too many details rally for prominence, especially among the woodwind and brass, which distorts the overall balance of Tchaikovsky's meticulously fashioned score. It's interesting as a hi-fi curio but the ballet is the main attraction – and a very worthwhile one.

THE RECORDING



Tchaikovsky
The Sleeping Beauty;
Symphony No 4
Fistoulari *cond et al*
Eloquence © 2 ELQ482 7223

Classics RECONSIDERED



In Berlioz's 150th anniversary year, **Mark Pullinger** and **Tim Ashley** revisit Sir Colin Davis's first recording of *Les Troyens*, released by Philips in 1970



Berlioz

Les Troyens

Sols; Royal Opera House Chor & Orch / Colin Davis
Philips

Colin Davis's command of the score in all its splendour has never seemed to me more complete. A splendid rhythmic impetus lies at the heart of his interpretation, matching the nervous intensity of the metres and the constant sense of unrest. Energy characterises the performance so much that it is difficult to allow the sections where repose and a sense of stillness fill the score to assume their role without imposing a pull back. But

this is exactly what they must do; and even so simple and touching a song as poor drowsy, homesick Hylas's 'Vallon sonore' needs more calm than Davis seems willing to allow. Andromache's marvellous scene is oddly tame: the clarinet is too determined, and hardly seems to feel the mourning atmosphere, or the agony that comes over the music at the turn to the major. Veasey's Dido does not attempt the queenly dignity and tragic passion of Janet Baker's great performance; but if smaller, it is womanly, touching, decided and sung with great musical intelligence. Vickers is at his finest

in the heroic scenes: his first irruption into Troy is thrilling, and he never loses his grip on Aeneas's sense of mission. Only in the duet does he slip into the habit of allowing phrases to distort under tonal pressure. The chorus, though not always getting top marks in French Oral, sing magnificently. The recording itself is worthy of the whole enterprise, the great climaxes are both full, powerful and lucid, with the telling detail (often in brass) shining through as it should. Best of all is the handling of the distances, so that a sense of movement and space is felt without any restlessness. **John Warrack (5/70)**

Mark Pullinger Sir Colin Davis's *Les Troyens* was announced with a great deal of fanfare: the first complete recording, released for the Berlioz centenary. So JW had the luxury of around 1200 words for his review (hugely cut down in the version above!). That sense of excitement really comes across on the page, doesn't it?

Tim Ashley Yes, and I think it also reflects the excitement generated by the performance itself – that sense of discovery and exploration, of breaking new ground with the first recording of a work that we now acknowledge to be a masterpiece, but which for many was an unknown quantity at the time, and in some quarters was still considered inferior to the rest of Berlioz's output. That sense of excitement makes it in many ways unique.

MP Tim, now that we're marking Berlioz 150 and there are several sets of *Les Troyens* available, how well does this first recording stand up?

TA I still think it works wonderfully well, but I've always set great store by it.

I found it revelatory when I first heard it. There was still no other version available at the time, apart from EMI's two-disc digest sluggishly conducted by Georges Prêtre. Davis's performance changed lives, including mine. Other versions since have done it differently, but this recording sweeps me away every time I hear it.

MP Davis's missionary zeal comes across terrifically – he was the ultimate Berlioz champion. It was Desmond Shawe-Taylor who in these pages in 1963 wrote: 'There is no doubt that, as soon as some company plucks up the courage to give us *Les Troyens* complete ... they should send for Mr Davis and give him the best French cast that can be assembled.' So a Davis *Les Troyens* had long been hoped for.

TA We have to remember that the *Les Troyens* revival began with Rafael Kubelík's decision to give the opera more or less complete in a single evening at Covent Garden in 1957, albeit in English, and that Davis effectively came to the work in the wake of those performances. But by the mid-1960s, he was very much

making *Les Troyens* his own with the Chelsea Opera Group and at the Proms, so the recording didn't come entirely out of the blue. Berlioz enthusiasts had been hankering after it for some time.

MP It wasn't until 1969 that *Les Troyens* had its first complete performance in French at Covent Garden, under Davis. This 1969 recording uses many of those forces – notably Jon Vickers, Josephine Veasey and Peter Glossop – as well as the Royal Opera House Orchestra. How do you find the playing?

TA Outstanding. I like the density of the orchestral sound, particularly in the Trojan scenes, where the strings suggest a real sense of darkness, physical as well as psychological, illuminated by garish flashes of light in the brass and woodwind. Carthage seems so warm, opulent and inviting in contrast, until the Trojan March limps back in and starts poisoning the atmosphere.

MP The excitement generated by the choral singing and orchestral playing is



Sir Colin Davis (centre) is pictured here working with his Dido, Josephine Veasey, and his Aeneas, Jon Vickers

still infectious, especially in, for example, the Trojan March at the end of Act 1.

TA I always get goosebumps when I hear the chorus in the *Cérémonie funèbre* before Dido's suicide. There are some tentative entries in the Andromache episode, though I don't agree with Warrack that the clarinet solo is disengaged and the entire passage is 'oddly tame'.

MP No, I find that remarkable clarinet solo very moving here, tremendously eloquent and poignant.

TA The Act 1 finale is immeasurably helped by the actual recording, which really captures the sense of the procession appearing out of the distance and receding back into it again.

MP What about the singing, though? There was much lamenting that Janet Baker wasn't cast as Dido, but I find Veasey's performance very beautiful.

TA Technically, she's wonderfully secure. I love the evenness of her tone, and there's an ease in her upper registers that carries her effortlessly through 'Chers Tyriens', where some Didos falter. Her characterisation is subtle yet vivid. The way that private insecurities begin to undermine her regal image in the duet with Anna is marvellously done, and her rage when Dido loses control after Aeneas

has left her is truly disquieting: when she says she wishes she'd 'served him his own son's limbs for a hideous banquet', she briefly, if horrifically, sounds as if she really means it. How do you find Vickers? He's a singer who still divides opinion.

MP Vickers is not exactly my cup of tea as Aeneas. His is a Heldentenor voice, and he snarls his way through the role. I find him insensitive in 'Nuit d'ivresse' and aurally bruised by his 'Inutiles regrets'. Listen to Michael Spyres on the recent Erato release – 2018's Recording of the Year, which you and I both championed – for a different, but thrilling, approach to this role. But then, I guess little was known back then about the sort of tenor for whom Berlioz was writing?

TA Yes, indeed. I have more time for Vickers here than you do, but still have reservations. I like the almost lofty way in which he suggests Aeneas's impulsive nature with his peremptory command that the wooden horse be dragged into Troy, and you get a strong sense of a charismatic warrior from the fanatical energy with which he leads the Carthaginians to battle. But I never quite believe in Vickers as Dido's lover in Act 4, where Spyres is marvellous in managing to convey Aeneas's vulnerability and tenderness as well as his strength. As we've now mentioned the Erato set, how would you compare Davis's Berit Lindholm with

John Nelson's Marie-Nicole Lemieux? You were very taken with the latter when you reviewed it, I recall.

MP Hers is a remarkably vivid portrayal of Cassandra, especially considering the fact that it was the first time she'd sung the role. Her Cassandra is clearly unhinged from the start, whereas Lindholm is more controlled. But of all the singers on Davis's recording, I like Lindholm the most – a truly glorious sound. Why did she not have a bigger career? The only other time I've encountered her on disc is as one of Sir Georg Solti's Valkyries!

TA I've always thought her rather special, and never quite understood why she made so few recordings. I heard her several times in Wagner in the early '80s. Her voice was massive. Its power and beauty are superbly captured here, and I like the almost classical control of her singing. It's with her performance, perhaps, that we're most conscious here of Berlioz's debt to Gluck. In some ways, I prefer her to Lemieux. I think the role needs a dramatic soprano, rather than a mezzo, and Lindholm sings it quite wonderfully.

MP I like Glossop's Coroebus too, though his baritone has quite a wobble under pressure. He's no match for Nelson's Stéphane Degout.

TA Indeed. Glossop was another fine singer, but can be unimaginative here – though you could also argue that it's Coroebus's failures of imagination that make him in some ways such a tragic figure. But I do prefer Degout, whose patrician ardour in the role is utterly beguiling. How do you rate the Davis recording as a totality?

MP Overall, Davis's recording stands up very well, even if the Nelson has taken my prime library shelf spot. Davis's affection for Berlioz shines through in every bar. And the vocal performances are stronger than on his LSO Live 'remake'. There's a real sense of discovery which wears its five decades remarkably well.

TA The LSO Live version has its problems, perhaps because of late cast changes. Despite my reservations about Vickers, though, I still prefer the 1969 version (just) to the Nelson one. I admit that that's partly because it's a recording that's meant so much to me personally for many years. But for me, its energy, drive and drama have never quite been surpassed. For that reason, I still think it unique. **G**

Books



Hugo Shirley reads a concise introduction to the world of opera:

'Schweitzer's easy-going, informal prose is nicely gauged to be inviting and unburdened by jargon'



Nigel Simeone enjoys sharing the company of Howard Skempton:

'No matter what music by Skempton one might encounter, it is likely to intrigue and ensnare us into its crystalline sound world'

A Mad Love

An Introduction to Opera

By Vivien Schweitzer

Basic Books, PB, 288pp, £13.99

ISBN 978-0-465-09694-7



One imagines several decisions have to be made early in the process of writing a brief introduction to opera, and such books have tended to present various narrative strategies to cover the 400-plus years of this extravagant art form's history. Vivien Schweitzer's *A Mad Love* opts for what's perhaps the most straightforward – and simultaneously arguably the trickiest. Essentially her new book presents a chronological amble through operatic history, but one dotted with discussions of what makes opera so complex, interesting, rewarding and – sometimes – infuriating. As Schweitzer puts it in her preface, 'I have aimed to embed the fundamentals of the Western operatic tradition in a narrative context to show how composers have used different techniques and voices to create sung drama.'

Schweitzer – a music writer and, for a decade, a critic for the *New York Times* – is bang up to date with what she covers in terms of repertoire, performance practice and opera's relationship with technology. 'If you simply want to know the definitions of opera terminology,' she writes, 'the answers are of course only a Google search away.' But although she says she doesn't offer 'complete, detailed synopses', she has clearly decided that her readers need to know what these works are about: detailed or not, the operas she deals with all come with a brief description of the action.

Schweitzer's brisk jaunt from Monteverdi to Missy Mazzoli, then, has to take in a lot of excursions: to explain plots, often also squeezing in salient facts of a composer's biography; to take in favourite singers; and to cover those other issues she chooses to address. After dealing with *L'incoronazione*

di Poppea we briefly get on to the difference between opera and musical theatre, for example. At the end of a chapter loosely covering *bel canto*, we deal with Rossini, *grand opéra*, Stanley Kubrick, the fickleness of opera fans and much more within just a matter of pages, before veering back on track to Wagner. It's a narrative filled with many such awkward swerves and gear-changes.

The book's modest proportions also inevitably mean that there are omissions – no Massenet; no Poulenc; no mention of Gounod's *Faust*, arguably the biggest hit of the 19th century; no mention of Boito or, apart from a quick reference to the issue of opera and race, *Otello*. Reference to Verdi's Iago might have made Schweitzer think twice about suggesting, with regard to Scarpia in *Tosca* (who even refers to his Shakespearean forebear himself), that 'Unlike Verdi's multidimensional characters, Puccini's villain is unequivocally evil'. And while Schweitzer is to be applauded for being so up to date, there's a noticeable shift when we move away from covering the established canon to recent work: received wisdom is gradually replaced by Schweitzer's own views on works that she's seen – a selection that feels increasingly arbitrary. The fact that she struggles to find a convincing narrative to encompass these works, though, perhaps itself reflects the broad variety of subjects and musical approaches presented on the stage today.

The final chapter's shift between the general and personal also reflects the way Schweitzer writes throughout the book. Her easy-going, informal prose is nicely gauged to be inviting and unburdened by jargon, but one nevertheless wishes a little more time might have been taken to find the *mot juste*. Several male characters are 'psychos' and 'jerks', while a favourite adjective, 'gorgeous', is bestowed upon such varied subjects as *Figaro's* Act 2 finale, *Boris Godunov*, *Tosca* and *The Turn of the Screw*. Similarly, she is reluctant to delve beyond the surface of opera's aesthetic complexities, and I'd take issue with her

discussion of 'realism' in opera – it's surely less a matter of today's audiences 'enjoy[ing] the unreal' (as she suggests is evidenced by the success of *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars*, *Wonder Woman*) than opera audiences revelling in the alternative, heightened version of reality the art form presents. Newcomers to opera might also have benefited from more discussion of 'musicological' issues: how to realise early Venetian opera from skeletal scores in performance, for example, or the textual problems with *Don Giovanni* and its two versions (an opera that is otherwise dealt with in some detail). We have plenty on 'Regietheater' and modern production styles, too, but without much on why such productions came into being.

Despite these caveats, though, *A Mad Love* certainly represents an impressive feat of concision, packing a lot of useful information into a welcoming, lively little book. And no one will want to argue with Schweitzer's final assertion that 'Opera – and the power of the human voice – provides the authentic and heart-wrenching catharsis so very much needed in our time'. If her book brings more people to this realisation, then it can be counted a success. **Hugo Shirley**

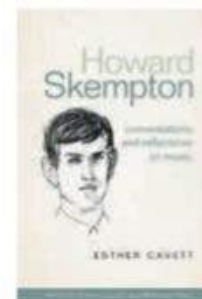
Howard Skempton

Conversations and Reflections on Music

Edited by Esther Cavett and Matthew Head

Boydell Press, HB, 296pp, £45

ISBN 978-1-783-27321-8



Simplicity is an over-used word, and one that is sometimes used to excuse or explain music that is fundamentally vacuous. But more properly applied – and in an entirely positive sense – it helps to describe one essential component of Howard Skempton's musical language, a composer whose works are often marked by ostensibly simple procedures to create

strikingly original sounds. Take, for instance, the *Duet for Piano and Woodblocks* (1976 – there’s a fine performance of this little gem played by Siwan Rhys and George Barton on YouTube). The ‘simplicity’ is immediately apparent – a single, slow-moving piano line in conversation with two woodblocks – but the subtle manipulation of rhythm and accent means that the effect is not only hypnotic but also intriguing – and in a way that surpasses its pared-to-the-bone surface detail. Skempton’s much more recent Piano Concerto, completed in 2015, is a far more complex proposition, and its beautifully voiced opening chords set the scene for a work in five short movements of impressive and sometimes bewildering variety. Of these, the first and third strike me as the most interesting – the first for its mesmerising harmonic shifts and exquisitely shifting colours, and the third for its charm and offbeat humour. A consistently original voice stands behind it all, bringing together passages of great refinement and individuality in a single work.

No matter what music by Skempton one might encounter, it is likely to intrigue (at the very least) and quite often (in my experience) to ensnare us into its crystalline sound world. A composer who can do that is one whose inspirations, influences and viewpoints ought to be of considerable interest, and so it proves in this new book, built around a series of conversations between Skempton and Esther Cavett. These have self-explanatory titles: ‘Childhood and teenage years’, ‘The music from *A Humming Song* (1967) to *Lento* (1990)’, ‘Becoming established and the music after *Lento*’ and ‘On teaching composition’. These are intercut with reflections by others on Skempton’s music. In her own reflection, Cavett wonders ‘how far the Conversations help to explain the music, rather than the man’, but in fact there is plenty in Skempton’s comments – honest, witty, fundamentally generous – that reveals aspects of a remarkable creative personality and, by extension, the products of that personality. Of the other reflections, Arnold Whittall’s comprehensive essay provides a valuable survey of Skempton’s music as a whole. Whittall summarises its consistent features as ‘simplicity, sincerity, subtlety: these seem to be the three Skempton virtues’. Pwyll ap Siôn writes about Skempton’s approach to teaching composition – a fascinating subject which is explored in depth here – and there are thoughtful contributions from Heather Wiebe (on ‘Skempton and experimentalism’) and Matthew Head (on ‘Music and/as home’).



In conversation: Howard Skempton, here as a young man, shares fascinating insights on music

Chapter Five is devoted to ‘Performing’ and includes insights from some of Skempton’s finest interpreters, among them the pianists Peter Hill, Thalia Myers and John Tilbury, and the conductor James Weeks. It’s interesting to read which aspects of Skempton’s work drew these musicians to it. For Peter Hill the initial appeal lay in music where ‘every sound mattered instead of being lost in a maze of complexity’, and also in its stylistic integrity, evident from the earliest works: ‘To find this still centre to one’s work, in an era when the world bombards us with musical experience, is a great achievement.’ Thalia Myers, who compiled the *Spectrum* volumes of new compositions that could be played by good student musicians, writes that Skempton’s music ‘presents a unique distillation of motivic idea and harmonic language from which all non-essential elements have evaporated. The result is a compositional language of great individuality, often embodying a particular lyricism, which frequently speaks strongly to people with little experience of 20th- and 21st-century “art” music’, adding that it provides ‘a perfect source of material to coax a conservative young musician into the world of new music.’ John Tilbury, the dedicatee and first performer of Skempton’s Piano Concerto, believes the common thread linking Skempton’s piano

pieces is that, ‘rather than expressing a “form”, Skempton’s pieces express a state of being, and in this he resembles Morton Feldman. The music creates space and release for both performer and listener, providing an antidote to the congestion that blights our lives.’

This book also includes the most detailed documentation of Skempton’s works, with a comprehensive worklist and a discography, both compiled with evident care. Combined with these valuable supplements, the result is a book in which the musings of the composer himself (often as engrossing as his music), of musicians close to him and of perceptive commentators give the reader a great deal more than might be expected from such a format. It’s a pretty comprehensive overview of Skempton’s composing and teaching, his influences (including Cardew, Webern and Feldman) and those he has influenced, and his preoccupations as a composer. Above all this, what emerges is a portrait of a man held in high regard and real affection by those who have worked with him. The book’s index is admirably detailed, and navigating cross-references is made more straightforward by the use of numbered paragraphs. Essential reading for anybody wanting to know more about one of Britain’s most captivating contemporary composers. **Nigel Simeone**

THE GRAMOPHONE COLLECTION

Ockeghem's *Requiem*

The earliest surviving setting of the Requiem Mass has been recorded in a range of contrasting ways, reveals **Fabrice Fitch**

Judging by the number of recordings made since the 1950s (well over a dozen), Ockeghem's *Requiem* is one of the best-known large-scale works composed before 1500, but of the circumstances of its creation we know next to nothing. By the mid-15th century, Mass cycles were a well-established genre, but the use of composed polyphony in the funeral liturgy took longer to catch on. The first record of a Requiem (or 'Mass for the Dead') concerns the one by Dufay, copied in 1470 and apparently quite recent; but because the music has been lost, Ockeghem's setting is usually described as 'the first *surviving* Requiem', even though it may conceivably have predated Dufay's. Ironically, there are several references to Dufay's lost work in the following decades (one of which tells us it was for three voices) but almost none to Ockeghem's, which survives. The plausible notion that it was written for the funeral rites of one of his royal patrons, Charles VII (d1461) or Louis XI (d1483), remains conjectural, and the work itself is sometimes described as 'problematic'. Why so?

THE PIECE AND ITS PROBLEMS

Listening to Ockeghem's *Requiem*, one is struck by its breadth of musical styles. The *Requiem*'s sections correspond to the chants of the liturgical texts on which they are based, and which are always heard in the top voice (in common with other early Requiem settings). The Introit, 'Requiem aeternam', is starkly chordal, recalling styles of improvised polyphony current at the time. This continues in the *Kyrie*, which alternates three- and two-voice statements, the former chordal, the latter more contrapuntal. In the final 'Kyrie' a fourth voice is heard for the first time, leading to a more sonorous conclusion.

From this point the work's sections become more varied and animated. The second part of the Gradual 'Si ambulem' (the verse 'Virga tua') has an extended duo for voices in different ranges, in which Ockeghem's soaring melodic lines really take wing; it closes again with a four-voice section, denser and deeper than the *Kyrie*'s. A similar plan informs the next section, the Tract 'Sicut cervus', except that the duos are for more nearly equal voices, first high then low. The contrast between these paired duos is very effective, the former ethereal and placid, the latter brooding and questioning. As in the preceding sections, the Tract finishes in four voices with the solemn question 'Where is thy God?', underlined by a final cadence that unexpectedly turns in on itself at the last. The Offertory is something else again. Ockeghem indulges in a little word-painting when the text evokes the 'pains of hell and the deep pit', whereupon one of the low voices has some truly florid singing, all fire and fury. The Offertory's complex polyphony is Ockeghem at his intricate best, bringing the work to a fitting climax.

Or does it? The piece's wide range of styles, differences in the scoring of its movements and other details lead to the conclusion that the *Requiem* as it comes down to us (there is only one complete source) is in no sense a finished work. Its sections may have been composed at different times, and it is practically certain that there once existed a *Sanctus*, an *Agnus Dei* and a 'Lux aeterna'. Thus the work's compelling trajectory from simplicity to complexity may in fact be an accident of transmission; some writers have even suggested that its opening movements were originally part of Dufay's lost work. It wouldn't be the only Requiem with a mysterious



genesis or heated debates surrounding its completeness and authorship ...

SOME EARLY RECORDINGS

Many of these questions are echoed in the existing recordings: what to do about the missing movements, the different notated voice-ranges of the existing ones or the questionable authenticity of certain passages. Otherwise the range of performance options in the discography recalls those in the Collection devoted to Machaut's Mass a couple of years ago (10/17). Instruments would not have featured at all at the French royal chapel when Ockeghem led it (c1453-97); his ensemble may not have consisted of much



Pages from the Chigi codex (c1503), which contains all the surviving Masses Ockeghem is known to have composed, including the Requiem

more than a dozen singers, with falsettists on top lines. I feel that the music sounds best that way, but that's not meant to exclude other approaches: formerly stringent interpretations of 'authenticity' are now tempered by the realisation that pieces by the best composers circulated widely and that performance conditions varied from place to place.

The earliest complete recordings, like the ones by the Prague Madrigalists (c1965; 9/74) and the Clemencic Consort (1975) – both nla – featured instruments in the manner of the time; René Clemencic had fine musicians but his arbitrary decisions stretch credibility, given subsequent

researches into performing ensembles. Although neither recording was transferred to CD, the same aesthetic informs the recording by Ensemble Métamorphoses under **Maurice Bourbon**. Instruments of different types randomly alternate with voices on individual lines, with little regard for musical syntax. Liturgical forms are misunderstood: certain prescribed musical repeats are simply ignored and the voices are oddly mismatched. Though apparently recorded in 1990, it is a throwback to an earlier era. Pro Cantione Antiqua's account used instruments not more sparingly but wisely, with a wind quartet doubling the voices in the most fully

scored sections: more or less contemporary with Clemencic's, its blended sound was a significant departure from the 'kitchen-sink' approach (an uncharitable but succinct label) of other versions with instruments. The tempos of the opening sections are markedly slower than would be the case later, but that's no great criticism given how little is known of absolute tempos in this period. Besides, the cast of performers is far superior to its existing rivals (it's difficult to argue with a top line-up that boasts James Bowman, John Elwes and David Thomas). Only in the thick, animated textures of the Offertory does the sound recording show its age, with a hint



Was the Requiem written for one of Ockeghem's royal patrons, Louis XI (pictured left) or Charles VII? It's plausible, but remains unproven

of saturation. But **Bruno Turner's** ensemble is arguably the first to capture the spirit of these early Requiems: a contemporary report of Dufay's setting as 'mournful, sad and very exquisite' describes PCA's approach very well.

There was a 10-year hiatus before another English group tackled the work, by which time what is known as the 'a cappella hypothesis' had burst on to the scene. The Hilliard Ensemble's recording under **Paul Hillier** for EMI Reflexe was no less revelatory than had been PCA's a decade earlier: an ensemble of just half a dozen singers with dead-straight, vibrato-less intonation, and of course the total absence of instruments. I still listen to it with affection; the sound image of the ensemble and the recording by the

legendary Gerd Berg has lost little of its magic, despite some problems with the CD remastering. There's some wonderful singing in the duos of the middle movements, and each time the fourth voice enters the effect is spellbinding. But the Offertory is rather ponderous, and noticeably slower than PCA's. Trailblazing as it was for the ensembles following in its wake, its reverential approach has aged more than the sound recording. That said, the accompanying account of the *Missa Mi-mi* is one of the Hilliards' finest, deserving of a place on any serious collector's shelf.

MIXED CHOIRS

Though few in number, recordings from the 1970s are extremely varied:

alongside PCA's and Clemencic's accounts seems to be the first of several for mixed *a cappella* choir, this time from Schola Cantorum Stuttgart, who specialised in early and contemporary repertoire under the direction of **Clytus Gottwald** (they premiered Ferneyhough's *Time and Motion Study III* around the same time). Here the vibrato and determinedly choral approach are very dated, and when Gottwald reaches the low-voice duo of the Offertory he slows down drastically, robbing the moment of both drama and coherence. It all feels very 'conducted'. Two decades later, **Bo Holten's** hand on the tiller of Musica Ficta is less oppressive and the straighter tone more in keeping with modern tastes; but it is rare for choirs to achieve the consistency that a small group of singers can, and

THE 'HISTORICAL' RECORDING

Pro Cantione Antiqua /
Bruno Turner

Archiv © 7 D 445 667-2

Voices and instruments combine in



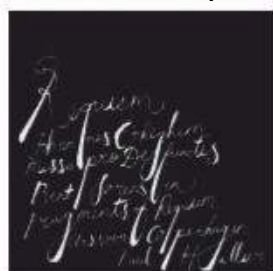
a reading that has aged very well and captures, possibly for the first time on record, the true pathos and spirit of an early Requiem Mass.

THE CHORAL APPROACH

Ars Nova /
Paul Hillier

Dacapo © 6 220571

Paul Hillier's experience is evident in



a polished reading that includes newly composed music for the lost sections of Ockeghem's work by Bent Sørensen.

VERSION WITH HIGH TENORS

Diabolus in Musica /
Antoine Guerber

Bayard Musique © 308 475-2

The choice of a low pitch makes for



a darkly splendid reading with high tenors and very low basses. The tempos are sensible, and the musical text has been cleaned up, too.

Musica Ficta's competent but not faultless account never catches fire. Even in reduced sections the voices are nearly always doubled, so the pleasure to be had from individual timbres is lacking. Pretty much the same points hold (and to the same extent) for the more subdued performance of the Belgian Laudantes Ensemble under **Guy Janssens** a decade later, though the Swedish ensemble is marginally the cleaner and more secure of the two.

THE REQUIEM RECONTEXTUALISED

If any recording forces me to suspend disbelief as to the use of modern mixed choirs in this repertory it is the most recent, by Ars Nova Copenhagen under **Paul Hillier** (who has led no fewer than three recordings of the Requiem, and more Ockeghem besides). Despite radically different personnel, Hillier's view of the work is essentially the same as in his recording with the Hilliards. Technically the Danes outclass their choral rivals, achieving better blend and a more polished performance; the use of soloists in reduced sections offers the best of both worlds. The soloists' voices are not as individual as on some recordings with smaller casts but they are effective and persuasive nonetheless. The twist is that Ockeghem's music is interspersed with new settings by Bent Sørensen (b1958), which deals ingeniously with the problem of those missing sections. Providing one doesn't object to the approach on principle – I've done similar things myself, and here it works very well – there is much to enjoy from the conjunction. The very broad acoustic may suit the new music better than the old, yet it's an atmospheric sound image. But it would take something much stronger than suspended disbelief to pass the Hilliard Ensemble's video for Silverline Classics, a scarcely credible piece of unintentional comedy filmed in the Romanesque church of San Nicolao in Giornico, in which the singers act as a backdrop to a group of very young female dancers in unitards who 'evolve picturesquely' (I suppose is the phrase) to the music. That anyone can have thought this a good idea is mind-boggling; perhaps the most remarkable thing about the Hilliards' performance is their managing to keep straight faces. (The transfer of the audio track, by the way, is very poor.)

POLYPHONY AS CHAMBER MUSIC

The remaining recordings follow the Hilliard Ensemble in using around half a dozen singers, with two singers on each voice for the most part; but any similarities of approach are more than offset by the



Ockeghem (front right, hooded) performs with the French royal chapel

different types of voices and choices of pitch-level. The Clerks' Group under **Edward Wickham** and Josquin Cappella under **Meinolf Brüser** both have sopranos on the top lines, sometimes combined with countertenors. That this doesn't result in too great a disparity between the sections is due to some skilful blending of timbres, especially with 'The Clerks' Group. When their recording first appeared I noted the contrast between their bright approach and the other accounts then available (their choice of pitch is the highest of any existing

in details of phrasing and shaping.

For the Offertory, both the Clerks and Josquin Capella switch to an all-male distribution, unless my ears deceive me. This is because the written ranges of the Requiem's sections vary considerably: the top line of the Offertory is noticeably lower than in any other section and the overall range of the Tract considerably wider. But as the notion of absolute pitch seems not to have existed at the time, it is possible to 'transpose' certain sections to fit the voices available – or

version as far as I'm aware, a tone above notated pitch). But while the Clerks' grasp of Ockeghem's style is as firm as one might expect, and despite some fine singing (particularly in the Tract), that very brightness now sits oddly with the work's character, especially in the light of subsequent readings. (The Clerks' account of Ockeghem's little-recorded *Missa Fors seulement*, on the other hand, remains convincing.) The warmer tone and more subdued approach of the Josquin Capella is very pleasing. These are intelligent singers with very attractive voices but Ockeghem's style is not as familiar to them as that of later Renaissance composers, which tells

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

RECORDING DATE / ARTISTS	RECORD COMPANY (REVIEW DATE)
1973 Pro Cantione Antiqua, London / Turner	Archiv © ⑦ 445 667-2AH7 (1/74 ^R , 4/86 ^R)
1976/78 Schola Cantorum, Stuttgart / Gottwald	Brilliant Classics © ④ 94267 (3/12); © ⑩ 95104
1984 Hilliard Ens / Hillier	Erato © ② 628492-2 (10/85 ^R , 2/89 ^R)
1989 Hilliard Ens / Hillier	Silverline © ② 323
1990 Ens Métamorphoses de Paris / Bourbon	Arion © ARN68149
1992 Ens Organum / Pérès	Harmonia Mundi © HMA195 1441 (2/94 ^R)
1996 Clerks' Group / Wickham	ASV Gaudeamus © CDGAU168 (5/97)
1997 Musica Ficta / Holten	Naxos © 8 554260
2004 Josquin Capella / Brüser	Dabringhaus und Gromm © MDG605 1269-2 (8/05)
2007 Laudantes Consort / Janssens	Cypres © CYP1648 (11/07)
2012 Cappella Pratensis / Bull	Challenge Classics © CC72541 (7/12)
2012 Ars Nova Copenhagen / Hillier	Dacapo © 6 220571 (7/12)
2018 Diabolus in Musica / Guerber	Bayard Musique © 308 475-2

INTRODUCING **Classical**^{MUSIC} Harmony in Mind campaign

To help tackle the growing mental health crisis in the classical music industry, *Classical Music* is launching a new campaign to support musicians and lead the way in securing better mental health provision across the sector.

The campaign will:

- Encourage organisations to sign up to the Time to Change employers' pledge
- Share best practice, new research, advice and resources for musicians
- Recognise outstanding work in the field by introducing an annual award and hosting an event at the Royal Opera House for World Mental Health Day



A recent study conducted by Help Musicians UK found that



71%

of respondents experienced anxiety and panic attacks



65%

reported they had suffered from depression

To find out more and how you can help, visit
WWW.RHINEGOLD.CO.UK/HARMONYINMIND



Capella Pratensis record the Requiem, 'a compact, rounded performance of impassive beauty'

even the entire work, as **Marcel Pérès** does with his Ensemble Organum. As with his recording of Machaut's Mass just a few years later, Pérès entrusts the top lines to high tenors exclusively. This was one of the last recordings, with an extraordinary line-up including tenor Josep Benet and baritone Josep Cabré, before the ensemble definitively embraced the 'Corsican goatherd' sound that later inspired Graindelavoix. At the time there were few ensembles to match it for pure sonority, and there have been few since. Add to that a judicious use of microtonal ornamentation and memorable readings in plainchant from Pérès himself and you have one of the most compelling readings around. But Pérès is equally capable of making maddening decisions: to accommodate the Tract's wide range (nearly three octaves), he transposes the duo for lower voices up a fourth. While there is no problem changing pitch between sections, doing so within a section does violence to the continuity of the plainchant and to Ockeghem's subtle architecture. How far the one misstep invalidates the entire interpretation is naturally a matter of taste, but I brace myself every time I approach this passage.

Organum's performance is, however, a direct precursor to the most recent one, by Diabolus in Musica: a low pitch and high tenors for the top lines, microtonal ornaments at cadences (though sounding a touch pasted-on) and sensible tempos. They also repeat the first part of the Gradual after the verse, which is

appropriate in a Requiem Mass but which only Pérès does otherwise – and they don't mess up the Tract. In fact, they entrust the highest line to a countertenor whose timbre sits deep enough to blend seamlessly with the lower voices. In many ways, then, **Antoine Guerber** delivers on the promise of Pérès's approach. In the most florid passages individual virtuosity is perhaps a shade less secure, and I cannot understand the precise choice of plainchants in place of the missing movements. But the sound image rivals Organum's. It's not so much the voices' individuality as the unanimity of ensemble and the feel for the style of a composer notoriously difficult to pin down, all of which overrides the odd imprecision. And they are the first to use a recent edition that fixes a number of misprints, missing words and problematic passages in past editions and the original source.

In a curious parallel with Diabolus in Musica and Organum, the final recording to be considered echoes the Hilliard Ensemble's, and at a similar distance in time. Cappella Pratensis under **Stratton Bull** perform everything a semitone below written pitch, using countertenors on the top line (Dufay stipulated in his will that the performing ensemble for his Requiem should include falsettists). As with Diabolus in Musica, what impresses most is the collective sound; in addition, the coherence of their interpretative choices grows more convincing with repeated listening (bar the decision not to repeat the opening of the Gradual). In purely interpretative


terms they have the edge over their French counterparts even though their approach may seem less distinctive at first blush. The greatest departure from previous accounts is the tempo of the opening sections, which is refreshingly crisp (which I failed to note in my review). No ethereal contemplation here: death is a fact of life, the solemnity of the Requiem Mass deriving instead from the compactness of the ensemble – impersonal (or rather supra-personal), hieratic, solid as a wall. Moreover, the focus is maintained to the end, making this the most consistent, rounded account to be had.

FINAL CHOICES

Twenty years ago I suggested that no single recording of the Ockeghem Requiem was completely satisfying. Has that changed? Not just yet, but subsequent performances have undoubtedly raised the stakes. My top choices balance personal taste and contrasted approaches – something for nearly everyone, perhaps. Though my first choice would not be for a modern mixed choir, Ars Nova's questing spirit deserves recognition, especially the replacement of the lost sections with new music; as to Ockeghem's music, it is the only choral account to rank alongside the smaller ensembles. Pro Cantione Antiqua's is the finest of the 'historical' recordings, predating my next-oldest choice by nearly 40 years. Its use of instruments is the least distracting and most effective, bearing in mind that the ensemble for which Ockeghem probably wrote included none. Of the recordings I've passed over, the Hilliards' EMI recording has moments of beauty and is still worth hearing; The Clerks' Group are technically sound but their high pitch and bright palette don't strike the right note; and Organum's otherwise splendid reading would have been a strong contender in all categories were it not for one major miscalculation to which I'll never get used, but which others may choose to overlook. That leaves Diabolus in Musica's low scoring and the focused, sober beauty of Cappella Pratensis – my first choice, by a whisker. **G**

THE TOP CHOICE

Cappella Pratensis / Stratton Bull

Challenge Classics (E)  CC72541

A compact, rounded, thoughtful performance of impassive beauty, Cappella



Pratensis fashion a coherent performance out of a varied collection of individual movements in a recording that grows with repeated listening.

PERFORMANCES & EVENTS

Presenting live concert and opera performances from around the world and reviews of archived music-making available online to stream where you want, when you want

OperaVision

Stuart MacRae's *Anthropocene*, May 17

'In the frozen Arctic wastelands, an expeditionary team of scientists becomes trapped. Tensions rise and relationships crumble; and then something appears, out of the ice...' So reads the teaser to *Anthropocene*, Stuart MacRae's fourth operatic collaboration with librettist Louise Welsh which Scottish Opera premiered to acclaim earlier this year. This first run consisted of only five performances, split between Glasgow, Edinburgh and London. However, OperaVision filmed it, and this month it arrives on its platform for free on-demand viewing. The production is directed by Matthew Richardson, and features a strong cast: Scottish Opera Emerging Artist Jennifer France, who's fast making a name for herself, plus the soprano Jeni Bern and the baritone Stephen Gadd. Stuart Stratford conducts.

operavision.eu

Concertgebouw Recital Hall, Amsterdam & online

Tansy Davies world premiere, May 17

The Amsterdam Concertgebouw currently has a Brit as its composer-in-residence, in the form of Tansy Davies. This evening concert from the contemporary music ensemble AskolSchönberg presents two of her works for mixed chamber ensemble: her brand new Concertgebouw commission, *Soul Canoe*, whose instrumentation features electric guitar, accordion, saxophone and sleigh bells alongside traditional strings and woodwind; then her 2005 work, *Salt Box*, whose instrumentation is equally multi-timbred, with thunder sheets, electric keyboard and a metal dustbin. The rest of the programme is equally colourful, with Davies's works sitting in the middle of Louis Andriessen's *Hout* ('Wood'), and his co-composition with Martijn Padding, *Gesprek*. The concert then closes with Pete Harden's *At Pappa's Altar*.

concertgebouw.nl/en/concerts/boundless-asko-schonberg

Concertgebouw Main Hall, Amsterdam & online

Gimeno conducts Bruckner's *Symphony No 4*, May 19

Another Concertgebouw date, but at the opposite end of the stylistic scale, this Sunday morning concert sees a guest appearance from Gustavo Gimeno, music director of the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg,

ARCHIVE OPERA REVIEW

Mike Ashman reviews *La Juive* from Ghent's Opera Vlaanderen



Halévy

Fromental Halévy's and Eugène Scribe's *La Juive* (1835) remains one of the great lost operas, fanatically admired by (and influencing) Verdi, Wagner, Richard Strauss and Mahler, yet absent from the repertoire since the 1920s. Any revivals have been at the wish of tenors from Caruso to Neil Shicoff intrigued by the ambivalence of the role of Éléazar (here Roy Cornelius Smith) – a hard father figure prepared to sacrifice Rachel, the daughter he knows is neither his nor Jewish – and, like this performance, they have always been cut.

Musically the opera sounds like an almost perfect bridge between later serious Rossini and early mature Wagner. The arias (like Éléazar's 'Rachel quand du Seigneur') take the form of dramatic

scenas rather than display vehicles while the astonishing, ever-evolving love duet of Rachel and Léopold in Act 2 resembles a more old-fashioned *Tristan* where the voices do join together. But the score's unique strength lies in its unhackneyed dramatic line. Rather as in Adams's and Goodman's *Nixon in China*, we are given a political situation that invites instant side-taking (Christian dominance and persecution of Jews) but is then delivered free of goodie/baddie melodrama.

Peter Konwitschny's production is stripped down, simple, beautifully directed on these acting singers with acute psychological insights – none greater (or truer) than the hysterical laughter which overtakes Rachel (Corinne Winters) and her disguised lover Léopold (Enea Scala) when he admits to her that he's not Jewish. 'Tenors!' she actually comments aside to the audience. But that is one of the few Regisseur interruptions Konwitschny allows himself in a most serious piece of work that is the best possible advertisement for lost repertoire that cries out to be restored. **Mike Ashman**

Available to watch free of charge until October 5, 2019 at operavision.eu

and incoming Music Director of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (2020/21). He conducts the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra in Bruckner's *Symphony No 4, Romantic*.

concertgebouw.nl/en/concerts/gustavo-gimeno-conducts-bruckner-s-symphony-no-4

Brussels Centre for Fine Arts & online

The Queen Elisabeth Violin Competition finals, May 20-25

This major annual competition is always a place where you're likely to get your first tasters of the great talents of the future. For instance one of their 2017 unranked finalists was French cellist Bruno Philippe, whose Myaskovsky and Rachmaninov cello sonatas accompanied by Jérôme Ducros (HM) was a *Gramophone* Editor's Choice in March. 2019 is Violin Year, and those who make it to the finals will be playing with the Belgian National Orchestra under Hugh Wolff. Jury members

include Corina Belcea of the Belcea Quartet and Pierre Amoyal, and they're awarding a long list of prizes including a top cash prize of €25,000. These finals are being streamed live and on demand on the competition website, where you can also catch up on the semi-finals. Plus, if you're really keen, you'll find the First Round performances on Musiq'3.

quimc.be

Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek & live-streamed Playing with Peer Gynt, May 22

No music but plenty of talk about music! The Spanish director Calixto Bieito, who can be guaranteed to shake things up, has staged Norway's national epic, *Peer Gynt*, as re-imagined by the novelist Karl Ove Knausgård from Solveig's perspective. Ahead of the premiere of *Waiting* (to music by Edvard Grieg) Bieito talks to Charlotte Myrbråten.

fib.no/en/programme/playing-with-peer-gynt/

Peter Quantrill reviews Teodor Currentzis's Verdi Requiem, a performance given in an historic setting

Verdi

At every turn Teodor Currentzis continues to mock the frivolous tag of conducting *enfant terrible*. Personally convinced of Verdi's Requiem not as a covert opera but a sacred drama by a troubled believer, he moulds the *a cappella* section of the *Kyrie* as *cantabile* Palestrina and swings the *Sanctus* like a spring round-dance, a missing link between Bach and free jazz.

Early in April, he brought the Mass back to the site of its 1874 premiere in the Chiesa di San Marco in Milan: a high-stakes setting of ecclesiastical resonance enhanced by a spoken liturgical introduction, the clerical robes worn by his choir and orchestra and a camera and lighting



scheme that, like his direction of unexaggerated extremes, evokes shades of the 1967 film made at La Scala by Henri-Georges Clouzot and Karajan.

Run in by a week of rehearsals at their base in Perm and then an intensive two-

week European tour, the MusicAeterna singers and instrumentalists achieve small miracles of internal balance, articulation and tonal colour. They were joined during that time by a sequence of unstarred soloists but the two constants throughout were the soprano Zarina Abaeva and the bass Tariq Nazmi, who both turn in performances of selfless dedication. Placed up in front of the high altar, Abaeva – a company member back in Perm

– brings her experience as Aida to bear on a 'Libera me' touched by soft, high singing of unmissable assurance.

Peter Quantrill

Available to watch as part of subscription packages at takt1.com and medici.tv

Chicago Cultural Center, WFMT 98.7 FM & wfmt.com

The Music Academy of the West's 2018 competition winners' recital tour, May 22

If you missed the January London leg of The Music Academy of the West's 2018 competition winners' recital tour, the Chicago date of the Marilyn Horne Song Competition winners mezzo-soprano Kelsey Lauritano and pianist Andrew Sun is being live streamed this month. Their programme features *Without Music*, a newly-commissioned work by Ricky Ian Gordon working with the poet Marie Howe. wfmt.com

Komische Oper, Berlin & live on OperaVision Roxy and her Dreamteam, May 31

Of all the theatrical events in our pages this month, this live-streamed new production by Stefan Huber of Paul Abraham's 1937 operetta, *Roxy and her Dreamteam*, is probably the most madcap and fun of the lot: a turbulent sports satire about a bride on the run who turns the heads of an entire football team, with its music a blend of jazz, puszta and operatic melodies. Kai Tietje conducts a cast including Uwe Schönbeck, Christoph Marti, Johannes Dunz, and Andreja Schneider from the German musical cabaret trio, Die Geschwister Pfister.

operavision.eu

Salle Bourgie & Maison symphonique, Montréal & online

Concours Musical International de Montréal, May 29 - June 5

As in Brussels, it's the turn of the violin for this year's International Music Competition in

Montreal, with the jury presided over by Zarin Mehta including the violinist Pierre Amoyal and the viola-player Kim Kashkashian. Those who make it to the final will be playing their concertos with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, which for the first time at the competition will be under the baton of Alexander Shelley, and the career-enhancing prizes they're competing for include a \$50,000 career development grant, a \$20,000 instrument crafted by Quebec makers, and a \$2500 artist residency at Canada's Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. All three rounds will be streamed on the competition website (first round May 29-30; semifinals June 1-2; and finals June 4-5), plus they're also streaming some of the surrounding events: a pair of 'Mini Violini' concerts showcasing previous junior age competition winners in recital-style format and with I Musici Chamber Orchestra under Cho-liang Lin (May 27 and 28) and a masterclass with Pierre Amoyal (May 31).

concoursmontreal.ca/en/the-competitions/violin/

Nationaltheater, Munich & staatsoper.tv

Manacorda conducts Gluck's Alceste, June 1

This new production for the Staatsoper of Gluck's tragedy is directed by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, who staged Rameau's *Les Indes galantes* at the Munich Opera Festival 2016. He says, 'When I see opera singers singing, I feel that they are dancing', and his interpretation therefore focuses on the connection between dance and song. It's a great line-up of artists too, topped by Antonello Manacorda on the conductor's podium and Dorothea

Röschmann in the title role, who sings alongside Charles Castronovo (Admète) and Michael Nagy (Le Grand-Prêtre d'Apollon / Hercule).

dtaatsoper.de

Philharmonie, Berlin & Digital Concert Hall

Michael Sanderling conducts Haydn and Shostakovich, June 1

Michael Sanderling's conducting debut with the Berlin Philharmonic opens with Haydn's Cello Concerto No 2, which feels immensely appropriate in light of the fact that Sanderling was a cello soloist himself for many years, and the soloist for this performance is the orchestra's own Principal Cello, Bruno Delepelaire. The second work on their programme is Shostakovich's *Leningrad* Symphony, No 7.

digitalconcerthall.com

Orchestra Hall, Detroit & DSOLive

Slatkin conducts the Detroit's Classical Series season finale, June 9

It's the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Music Director Laureate, Leonard Slatkin, who gets to conduct this year's season finale in their Classical Series, and it's looking like one which should fizz. Opening the concert is the world premiere of *Oil & Water* by Juliet Palmer, winner of the DSO's Elaine Lebenbom Award for Female Composers. Next comes Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* with a soloist renowned in both the jazz and classical worlds, Makoto Ozone. They then bow out with a virtuoso orchestral showpiece, Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*.

dso.org

Oranges & Lemons

of Battersea

Home Cinema Hi-Fi & Streaming Multi-Room

020 7924 2040

www.oandlhifi.co.uk 61-63 Webbs Road London SW11 6RX



MusicMatters
Specialists in sound & vision



Visit our website or call us for advice...
musicmatters.co.uk

Birmingham	0121 429 2811
Solihull	0121 742 0254
Leamington Spa	01926 888 644
London	020 8420 1925
Stratford	01789 414 533



Est. 1970
IAN EDWARDS
OF HARROGATE Est. 1970

Tel: **01423 500442**

for sales/enquiries or FREE brochure call - 01423 500442
www.iansbespokefurniture.co.uk



Handmade Bespoke Furniture
for CD's • LP's • DVD's & Books

The Old Chapel, 282 Skipton Road,
Harrogate, Yorkshire HG1 3HE

020 7226 5500
www.grahams.co.uk



"One of the five best hi-fi
shops in the world"
ARENA Magazine

Grahams Hi-Fi
Canonbury Yard
190a New North Road
London N1 7BS

Ian Harrison HI FI Sale!
UP TO 40% OFF!

SPECIALIST SUPPLIER OF TURNTABLES, TONEARMS,
CARTRIDGES, PHONO STAGES, RECORD CLEANING
MACHINES, HEADPHONES & CABLES
TEL: 01283 702875 (UK) 9AM - 9PM
EMAIL: IAN.HARRISON@MERCIAN.MYZEN.CO.UK

the solution

Loud Too Loud Way Too Loud

Excess gain in a system is a common problem, but it can be cured using **Rothwell In-Line Attenuators**. 1000's of satisfied customers worldwide.

£39/pair

01204 366133 www.rothwellaudioproducts.co.uk

**To
ADVERTISE
IN THIS
SECTION
PLEASE
CALL
020
7501
6368**

HIGH FIDELITY

● THE TECHNOLOGY THAT MAKES THE MOST OF YOUR MUSIC ●



THIS MONTH An all-new duo from a British brand become Austrian, a do-it-all disc player – and are we seeing a ‘real hi-fi’ revival?

Andrew Everard,
Audio Editor

JUNE TEST DISCS



The genesis of Bruce Levingston's album was a concert for a new civil rights museum and this is a sparkling DSD128 recording



This gorgeous set of Purcell pieces by the soprano Rowan Pierce has a wonderful directness in this Linn Records 192kHz/24-bit release

Headphones in all shapes and sizes – and more

The ways to listen keep expanding, from tiny in-ear buds to innovative full-size headphones



Exotic headphones are now well established in the market but the Chinese manufacturer Shanling thinks it has a new twist. The company behind the little M0 player, seen in these pages last year, now has a high-quality in-ear headphone design, complete with aluminium housings and detachable cables, selling for a very sensible £99 **1**.

The ME100 model features a 10mm dynamic driver using a mix of plastics in the diaphragm to deliver a balanced, clean sound and is driven by powerful magnets and a lightweight voice coil. These are mounted in a low-resonance aluminium housing and connected to the outside world via a cable using a twisted pair configuration inside a transparent sleeve.

Somewhat on the grander scale is the latest arrival in the French company Focal's expanding headphone line-up **2**, the £2799 Stellia closed-back design, and the £2699 Arche headphone amplifier launched alongside it. Described as ‘French-made luxury at its best’, Stella uses the beryllium drivers for which Focal has become known: here the material is formed into an ‘M’-profile, giving what the company says is ‘very low mass (seven times lighter than titanium of identical rigidity) [to] enable an extraordinary acceleration factor to be obtained, ensuring unfailing adherence to the original audio signal’.

The driver surround is designed for long excursions and the housing has two vents to help control the motion of the diaphragm, along with internal diffusers to break up standing waves within the earcup. The hanger mechanism is derived from that developed for the company's flagship Utopia headphones, while the earpads combine memory foam, acoustic cloth and full-grain leather for optimum comfort and acoustic performance.

The Arche, Focal's first headphone amplifier, uses two balanced AK4490 digital-to-analogue converters to handle file formats up to 768kHz/32 bit and DSD256, and offers the user a choice of two internal amplifiers: a pure current ‘Voltage’ amplifier and a ‘Hybrid’ setting giving slightly emphasised tonal balance. Analogue, digital and USB inputs are provided, along with outputs on 6.35mm unbalanced and XLR balanced headphone sockets, plus RCA phonos to feed the output of the DACs to a conventional amplifier. Focal will offer downloadable firmware updates as and when required.

A different twist on headphones is offered by Australian-based Nuraphone, whose £349 Bluetooth design is said to adapt itself to your hearing ‘by monitoring otoacoustic emissions’, and which uses a two-stage driver assembly **3**. The ‘inova’ set-up has an in-ear element for mid-range

and high frequencies, surrounded by a bass driver within the earpiece designed to ‘deliver the bass through your skin’. The balance between the two is adjustable using a smartphone app, and the headphones also feature ‘a novel TeslaFlow music-activated cooling system’ to keep the ears comfortable.

Meanwhile, Klipsch has a novel design for its new R5 Wireless earphones **4**, which are designed for those who like to listen to their music on the move. The £100 Bluetooth model separates the electronics from the earpieces for a comfortable, lightweight feel, and the fit is enhanced with a choice of Klipsch's oval eartips and Comply foam tips, plus built-in earwings to keep the ‘phones in place.

Finally, a switch from personal audio to speakers, and the Danish manufacturer Scansonic HD has a new range of slimline speakers, the MB-B series **5** being named for original designer Michael Børresen and the company's chief designer Benno Baun Meldgaard. The speakers still feature the company's ribbon planar tweeter but this is now partnered with mid-range and bass drivers designed for better dynamic and frequency response characteristics. The crossovers have been redesigned and the cabinets reworked for better time-alignment of the drivers, improved impulse response and ease of placement through a ported configuration and optimised internal airflow with minimal damping.

The range starts at £1899/pr for the MB-1 B standmount, with optional MB-1 stands at £499 or £599 depending on configuration, and runs up to the MB-6 B floorstanders at £8999/pr. All the models are available in a black or white silk finish. **G**

● REVIEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Musical Fidelity M2si and M2scd

The latest arrivals from this well-known brand are a fairly conventional integrated amplifier and CD player. But there's a twist ...

Even before you unbox the new entry-level CD player and amplifier from Musical Fidelity, it's hard not to notice something's different: a new legend on the boxes declares this to be 'an Austrian brand'.

Yes, what was once a company making great play of its British heritage, and not averse to the odd Union flag here and there in its marketing materials, has, since about this time last year, been part of Vienna-based Audio Tuning Vertriebs GmbH, which for some 20 years had been the Musical Fidelity distributor in Austria.

Owned by Heinz Lichtenegger, who arguably single-handedly pioneered the current vinyl revival with his range of turntables, the company is perhaps best known as the parent of the Pro-Ject brand and its little Box Design audio components. Into this world has come Musical Fidelity, with founder Antony Michaelson still involved in a design capacity, and the M2s series we have here is one of the first fruits of the company under its new ownership. And while the stated aim is to 'to grow with new products and push into new markets', the first arrivals are simple and conventional, just as was the first Pro-Ject turntable.

Retaining the familiar Musical Fidelity industrial design seen right across the range, complete with high-quality metal casework and aluminium front panels, the M2s duo comprises the M2si integrated amplifier and the M2scd, which is unsurprisingly a CD player. Both are available in either black or silver, and each will set you back £799, placing them firmly in the same market sector as recent



MUSICAL FIDELITY M2si

Type Integrated amplifier

Price £799

Power output 76W per channel into 8 ohms; 137Wpc into 4 ohms

Inputs Six line, one with unity gain bypass

Outputs One set of speakers, tape, pre-out

Tone controls No

Accessories supplied System remote handset

Finishes Black, silver

Dimensions (WxHxD) 44x10x40cm

MUSICAL FIDELITY M2scd

Type CD player

Price £799

Outputs Stereo analogue, optical/electrical digital

Accessories supplied System remote handset

Finishes Black, silver

Dimensions (WxHxD) 44x10x37.5cm

musicalfidelity.com

arrivals from a couple of other well-known British brands: Arcam, now part of Harman International and thus Samsung, and IAG-owned Audiolab.

The 76W-per-channel M2si takes its simplicity very seriously, having just six line inputs: perhaps surprisingly, given its new parentage, there's no built-in phono stage and neither is there onboard digital-

to-analogue conversion, as found in many an integrated amplifier these days. The company says that 'by leaving DAC, CD, streaming and phono tasks to external devices, the amplifier is able to function as a pure analogue hub and delivers a sophisticated, highly engaging sound'. However, it does have an analogue input that can be switched into bypass mode,

HI-FI | HOME CINEMA | AUTOMATED SOLUTIONS



Based conveniently in central Guildford PJ Hi-Fi has specialised in the demonstration, provision and installation of quality hi-fi and home cinema for over 20 years. Our dedicated demonstration rooms allow you to listen in comfort to a range of exceptional products, whilst our friendly and knowledgeable staff are always on hand to answer any questions you may have. Whether you are looking for your first genuine hi-fi system, want to create a bespoke home cinema or wish to distribute music and movie throughout your house, PJ Hi-Fi can provide a solution to suit all budgets and criteria. As a truly independent retailer we are proud to say that we hand select, test and scrutinise all the products that we supply, ensuring a consistent standard of quality and reliability over our entire range of equipment. Drop in today to discuss your requirements or phone / email us to book a demonstration.

Tel: 01483 504801 | www.pjhifi.co.uk | Email: info@pjhifi.co.uk
3 Bridge Street | Guildford | Surrey GU1 4RY



SUGGESTED PARTNERS

The M2s duo would form the basis of an excellent system, when used with these add-ons ...

THE CHORD COMPANY CLEARWAY

The Chord Company's Clearway analogue interconnect will work well between player and amp. A matching speaker cable is available.



FYNE AUDIO F302

Compact, stylish and with a mature, dynamic sound, the F302 floorstanding speakers from Fyne Audio are a great buy.



enabling the amp to be used with the front-channel outputs of an AV receiver in a combined music/surround system, while a pair of pre-outs allow the amplifier to be used with an external power amp, for example to biampify suitable speakers.

The internal layout follows established Musical Fidelity thinking, in that the M2si is essentially a pre-amplifier, with its own power supply, and a pair of discrete power amplifiers, all packaged in a single box for convenience. What's more, it has more than enough power to drive the kind of speakers with which it's likely to be paired, that 76Wpc rising to 137W a side into a 4 ohm load, meaning that a demanding speaker load isn't going to find it struggling.

The M2sdc player is a similarly direct design, without the frills of extra digital inputs found in some rival designs. Instead you get a machine dedicated to nothing more than playing standard discs, and with nothing more than a pair of stereo analogue outs, plus optical and coaxial digital output sockets should you want to connect it into an external digital converter. The slot-loading mechanism is to the right of the display – I wonder why most players place it to the left? – and the player uses 24-bit Delta-Sigma conversion, in a dual-differential configuration for noise-cancellation. This is technology tried and tested in pricier Musical Fidelity models, as is the use of choke filtering for the mains input, again to reduce noise, while the player also applies noise filtering to the digital data stream to the same end. This combination of technologies, the company says, 'enables the player to measure up to far more expensive devices, with low distortion and a virtually flat frequency response, plus minimal noise and jitter'. Front-panel controls are kept to a minimum, as is the usual Musical Fidelity way, and both units can be controlled using the system remote handset supplied with each.

PERFORMANCE

As one might expect, setting up the M2s duo is simplicity itself: analogue interconnects from CD to amplifier, cables from amplifier to your chosen speakers, and you're done. For the purposes of this

review I was using the Neat Iota Xplorer floorstanding speakers, which proved an excellent match with the Musical Fidelity pairing, if perhaps a rather extravagant one, but there's no shortage of price-comparable speakers which would suit very well, such as some of the models in the Bowers & Wilkins 600 Series, the very affordable Wharfedale D330 floorstanders and Fyne Audio's F302s.

These are very easy components to match with speakers, simply because their sound is so easy-going and mature, with no overt sonic traits to upset things. But that doesn't mean the balance here is in any way dull or safe: rather the player and amplifier combine to present music with a big, rich yet clearly defined bass, a natural, transparent midband and a treble that treads the fine line between being explicit and open, and avoiding harshness.

These are very easy components to match with speakers, simply because their sound is so easy-going and mature

All of which means both amplifier and player serve well a wide range of recordings, from the very latest releases, which are delivered with both weight and detail supporting the musical flow, through to some of the rather brash-sounding early CDs, the worst aspects of which are, if not softened, at least not over-emphasised. And assessing the two components in isolation, as I did by inserting them one at a time into my reference system, reveals that they each maintain the characteristics of the two used as a pairing.

Fed from a very expensive network player, the amplifier was able to bring out the enhanced presence and information of high-resolution files and proved capable of very generous bass without any loss of control. Meanwhile the CD player, run through a high-end amplifier system, showed how persuasively it can play a disc and the levels of music enjoyment it can deliver, whether with a large-scale symphonic work or a delicate solo recording.

As already mentioned, the Musical Fidelity duo isn't exactly without

Or you could try ...

There's been something of a resurgence of affordable CD player/amplifier pairings of late, despite the advance of streaming music and all-in-one systems.

Denon 800NE

If you're looking for a less expensive alternative to the Musical Fidelity pairing, the Denon 800NE series is a good entry-level choice, combining fine engineering with an attractive sound. The DCD-800NE CD player is a real bargain at just £349, while the £449 PMA-800NE amplifier offers surprising levels of performance for the money. Find out more at denon.co.uk.



Audiolab 6000

Audiolab takes a slightly different approach with its 6000 series duo, which draws on the design of the long-running 8000 series models. The £379 6000CDT is merely a CD transport, with no built-in digital-to-analogue conversion; that circuitry is built into the 6000A amplifier, which sells for £599 and has four digital inputs plus Bluetooth, as well as line and moving magnet phono sections. For more details see audiolab.co.uk.



Arcam CDS50

Arcam, meanwhile, brings together the worlds of CD, SACD and network music playback in its £695 CDS50, forming a convenient bridge between physical media and streamed content. It also has digital inputs, as does the partnering SA10 amplifier (£695), which also offers Bluetooth, line and moving magnet phono connections. More information at arcam.co.uk.



competition at its chosen price-point. That it manages to offer so strong a showing suggests that the brand is in very safe hands. **G**

● REVIEW PIONEER UDP-LX800

Hip hip Blu-ray

This flagship Blu-ray machine may seem like overkill but under its skin is lurking a very fine music player

Two questions arise when one first encounters the Pioneer UDP-LX800. The first is: who in their right mind would pay £2200 for a machine at first glance offering nothing much you can't get from a £200 offering from the likes of Sony or LG? The second is even more prosaic: what exactly is a high-end video player doing in these pages?

From being a high-end replacement for DVD, offering higher-resolution sound and vision from films on disc, Blu-ray has rapidly become commoditised to the point that there are now players available for less than £100, with the least expensive – an LG capable of 4K high-resolution video and 3D (if anyone remembers that, or cares) – at just a shade over £50. What's more, LG's Korean rival, Samsung, has recently announced it's to stop making Blu-ray players, following Oppo's decision to do likewise last year, thus sparking yet another 'the end of physical media?' scare.

So does the Pioneer have any relevance in the current market? The answer is an emphatic yes, for under the skin of this 13.8kg machine are audio internals drawing heavily on the design of the company's similarly priced (but even larger and heavier) PD-70AE SACD/CD player. And that's a very good thing indeed, given the audio-only flagship's remarkable performance.

The UDP-LX800 is a universal machine, able to play Blu-ray, DVD, CD and SACD, and with full compatibility with the latest home cinema formats including the multiple versions of 4K video, along with '3D sound' from Dolby, DTS and Auro. At the heart of its audio section is a pair of ESS Sabre ES9026PRO eight-channel digital-to-analogue converters, enabling it to handle audio all the way up to 192kHz/24 bit and DSD5.6/128, both in stereo and multichannel; and as well as playing from disc, it can also do so from USB storage devices. It's also a fully fledged network player, being able to stream both audio and video from network-attached storage via an Ethernet connection.

In fact the only limitation here would seem to be that if you want to play SACD in its original form, you will need either a digital-to-analogue converter able to accept

a data stream over HDMI (the optical and coaxial outputs are downconverted to PCM), or an AV receiver with similar capability. But then, if you are buying a machine such as this, you're likely to want to take advantage of the multichannel audio it offers, and for that you really are going to need an AV receiver or processor with HDMI inputs. Indeed, use it with a compatible Pioneer receiver and the company's Precision Quartz Lock System is enabled, slaving the master clock of the player to that in the receiver for even more accurate digital transmission.

Direct analogue output from the Pioneer, should you simply want to use it in stereo, is provided on both RCA and balanced XLR sockets – but then, if you just want an audio player able to be used into a conventional hi-fi system, I might suggest you look instead at the PD-70AE, which will be much better suited to the task.

This is an excellent player, proving that you don't have to compromise sound quality for 'universality'

Universal the UDP-LX800 may be but that doesn't mean the Pioneer engineers haven't gone to town on the audio section here. The disc mechanism floats on its own suspension and is housed in its own isolation chamber, stamped in a honeycomb pattern to add rigidity. Meanwhile the main power transformer is in a copper-plated shield stamped with a pattern reminiscent of the f-shaped cut-outs in the soundboard of a string instrument, this detailing also helping with rigidity and the rejection of standing waves. The power supply circuitry is in a similar housing, this time stamped with a treble clef.

PERFORMANCE

While the limited viewing I did makes it clear that this is by any standards a remarkable video machine, what impressed me even more was just how well it plays music, whether from audio-only Blu-ray discs, SACDs, CDs or local/network storage. Clearly great care has been taken with the audio section here and the UDP-LX800 gets very close to the



PIONEER UDP-LX800

Type Universal disc player

Price £2200

Discs/formats played Blu-ray, DVD, SACD, CD, USB, network files

Audio file compatibility Up to 192kHz/24 bit and DSD5.6/128

Audio outputs HDMI, optical/coaxial digital, analogue on RCAs and balanced XLRs

Other connections Ethernet, 2x USB Type A, RS232 control, 'Zero signal' reference ground

Accessories supplied Remote handset

Dimensions (WxHxD) 43.5x13x33.9cm

pioneer-audiovisual.eu

high performance standards set by the company's audio-only PD-70AE.

If you go deep into the player's menus, you'll find switchable digital filters, which can be used to tune the output from the analogue audio stage. Pioneer defines these as 'Sharp (solid sound), Short (smooth startup sound) and Slow (soft sound)' but I have to say I found the second and third a bit too lush for my liking – and, anyway, this filtering is bypassed when the player is used in the 'Direct' (video off) mode, which gave the best all-round sound.

Rather like the player itself, the overall presentation here is big and bold, but not without subtlety. With higher resolution files in particular there's a lovely focus and clarity to the music but even at CD quality the mixture of nimbleness, dynamic slam and weight is highly attractive. That was certainly true when playing the LA Philharmonic/Mehta recording of Copland's *Appalachian Spring* from the 'Decca Sound: The Analogue Years' box-set – the Pioneer conveying both the lyricism and the stately power of the music.

Then again, with solo guitar in DSD128, in the form of Frederik Munk Larsen's 'Floating Islands' set from OUR Recordings, the sheer definition delivered by the Pioneer, used straight into my reference system in analogue, was quite startling, giving the listener a very close-up view of the instrument.

This is an excellent player, proving that you don't have to compromise sound quality for 'universality'. If, as some are suggesting, you may be buying your last 'do it all' physical media machine, this would be a prime candidate. **G**

● ESSAY

'There are definite signs of a hi-fi separates revival'

While some manufacturers are trying to integrate more, it's good to see that the 'old-fashioned' CD player and amplifier combination is making a comeback

Call me cautious, but I'm somewhat sceptical when it comes to highly integrated products – must be that old thing about putting all one's eggs in a single basket or something. Whether it comes to bank accounts, data storage or even my hi-fi system, I'm a firm advocate of more being better, however tempting simplification may seem.

A few things of late have focused my mind on this matter, not least of which was a sudden and unexpected – aren't they always? – drive failure in the NAS unit I use to store my music library. If I hadn't duplicated my storage – regular readers will know just how 'belt and braces' my set-up is – I'd now be looking at a lengthy process of re-downloading and re-ripping my entire collection, when I'd much rather be enjoying the music.

Instead I was able simply to switch servers and carry on listening while I sorted out the drive, so I was amused to hear a colleague advising a streaming music neophyte the other weekend: 'Yes, you need to mirror your drives, and have at least one cloud backup and a separate server somewhere away from your home,' he barked, adding for good measure: 'Do you work on your computer at home? Do you have a back-up? No? Why're you standing here talking to me, and not running in terror to your nearest computer shop right now?'

Harsh, yes, but fair, and I began to think the same way when I saw the new all-in-one RS200 'Wireless Loudspeaker System' from US company McIntosh. It's all very slick, with a wide range of streaming technologies, 650W of built-in amplification, eight speaker drivers and of course those famous blue-lit meters and green company logo, but what if part of it becomes outdated by some advance in audio or the arrival of a new network service?

One would be forced to think again about a new unit, or even find a way of bringing the new technology to the old system, much in the way that I have recently been trying to add Roon streaming to my existing network player. The new version has it but not the old, so to date I have been using a computer connected to it as a makeshift approach, before recently finding a little box able to

do the job more seamlessly. That box, by the way, is the little Raspberry Pi-based Sonore UPnP Bridge: selling for \$299 from its New Hampshire-based manufacturer, it plugs into one's network router and forms a link between the Roon system and any standard UPnP/DLNA network player. Yes, one could do the same with a Raspberry Pi computer, some freely available software and a bit of programming and configuration awareness, but for the plug-and-play ease of use and the fact it just works, the price seems very reasonable.

I'm a firm advocate of more being better, however tempting simplification may seem

All this got me thinking about what seems to be a current revival of what some might see as a very old-school style of hi-fi assembly. A number of manufacturers have recently launched CD player and amplifier pairings, designed to give simplicity of use via a single remote control and yet all the benefits of separating the digital playback and amplification tasks. Choose one of these duos, such as the excellent Musical Fidelity M2s models reviewed this month, add on a pair of speakers to suit your room, budget and listening tastes, and you have an instant hi-fi system, to which you can then add on extras such as a network player and so on. It seems everyone is re-embracing this old way of doing things, despite all the rumblings we hear of the end of 'physical media' and the fact that just about everyone you can think of now makes a Bluetooth speaker you simply connect to your phone – even Ikea now has a range, called Eneby, starting from just £45.



McIntosh **1** takes an all-in one route, and even Ikea **2** has its own Bluetooth speaker, but traditional separates live on with new introductions from companies including Rotel **3** and ATC **4**

In the face of that, and 'Alexa, play me ...', there are the traditional hi-fi separates. Some of the rivals to the Musical Fidelity pairing are outlined in the sidebar on that review but it seems they keep on coming, and at all kinds of prices. One of the stalwarts of traditional hi-fi, Rotel, has just bolstered its entry-level range with the arrival of the £429 CD11 CD player and £599 A11 amplifier, which are as 'straight down the line' as you could want. The CD11 is a CD player and no more, built around a respected Texas Instruments digital-to-analogue conversion system and with just a pair of analogue stereo outputs and a coaxial digital out; the amplifier, while it may concede to the modern world with Bluetooth for streaming from your phone, is otherwise a simple analogue design, with four line-ins and a moving magnet phono stage plus outputs for two sets of speakers.

At a higher level, ATC – perhaps best known for its loudspeakers – has followed up its SIACD all-in-one system and CDA2 player/DAC/pre-amp with a much more conventional combination of CD player and amplifier. The £1500 CD2 player follows the traditional 'just a player' route, using a high-quality TEAC drive, AKM conversion and power supply and analogue stages designed for optimal performance. The £2500 SIA2-100 amplifier, meanwhile, uses similar digital-to-analogue conversion but linked to inputs including a USB Type B for computer audio at up to 384kHz/32 bit and DSD5.6, as well as having 2x100W of power amplification, two sets of analogue inputs and a highly optimised audio layout within. With products like this appearing on the market, it really does look like the traditional hi-fi system isn't going anywhere anytime soon. **G**



www.klamicompetition.fi

The IV International Uuno Klami Composition Competition had a tremendous response, for the Competition Office received a total of 283 entries from no fewer than 37 countries.

FINALS CONCERTS IN 2019 (Finland)
14 Nov Kuusankoski Hall – 15 Nov Kotka Concert Hall
Tickets on sale in spring 2019

Orchestra Kymi Sinfonietta **Conductor** Olari Elts
Jury Kalevi Aho – Magnus Lindberg – Erkki-Sven Tüür – Olari Elts




Chetham's International Summer School & Festival for Pianists 2019

Artistic Director: **Murray McLachlan**

Also featuring the 6th Manchester International Concerto Competition for Young Pianists

Part One: 15–21 August 2019
Part Two: 21–27 August 2019

Artists include:
 Katya Apekisheva, Paul Badura-Skoda, Joseph Banowetz, Philippe Cassard, Peter Donohoe, Philip Fowke, Peter Frankl, Leslie Howard, Nikki Iles, Eugen Indjic, Eric Lu, Leon McCawley, Charles Owen, Dina Parakhina, Martin Roscoe, Craig Sheppard, Balázs Szokolay, Martino Tirimo

The Friendliest Piano Summer School in the World!

With daily concerts, lectures, improvisation, jazz, composition, intensive one-to-one coaching, duets, organ and harpsichord

For further information, call +44 (0)1625 266899 or email info@pianosummerschool.com
www.pianosummerschool.com

Potton Hall Recording Studio

- Set in Suffolk Countryside 5 miles from Southwold
- First class acoustics and facilities
- Steinway Model 'D' Grand Piano available
- A complete CD package available
- Reasonable rates
- Accommodation/Leisure Spa available on site
- Full Brochure available by request

www.pottonhallltd.co.uk | 01728 648265



GRAMOPHONE

**TO ADVERTISE IN
 THIS SECTION
 PLEASE CALL
 020 7501 6368**

0207 689 7533



LPs + CDs BOUGHT

ANYWHERE IN THE UK
 FAIR PRICES PAID
info@watsonrecords.co.uk

WATSON

RECORDS

revolutions

records and cds

*Run by musicians
for music lovers*

We buy classical LPs
From 1950s - 1970s

Examples - we will pay up to:

£2500 for Leonid Kogan on Columbia SAX

£1500 for Johanna Martzy on Columbia 33CX

£4000 for Andre Levy on Lumen

Top prices paid for EMI ASD, Columbia SAX,
Decca SXL.



We will travel to anywhere in
the UK to view sizeable collections
or can buy by post from your lists.

Quality hi-fi equipment purchased -

**EMT - GARRARD - TANNOY -
THORENS Etc.**

CD Collections also purchased

For prompt attention, contact:

Leslie Laine, BA (hons)

or Dr Matthew Pollard

Revolutions, 1st Floor 67 Victoria Road,

Worthing, West Sussex BN11 1UN

email: info@revolutions33.co.uk

Tel: 01903 209553

www.revolutions33.co.uk

Classical LPs/CDs wanted.
Can collect or deal by post.

www.esmetronrecords.com
esmetronrecords@btinternet.com

**TO ADVERTISE IN THIS
SECTION PLEASE CALL
020 7501 6368**



Yarborough House
Bookshop and Coffee House

4,000 CDs Rapidly Changing Stock.
Much unusual repertoire. All guaranteed.
Large secondhand general book stock.
We buy interesting LPs, CDs, DVDs and quality books,
particularly music, philosophy and literature.
Will collect or pay postage.
No mail order.

The Square, Bishops Castle, Shropshire, SY9 5BN
Open 5 days 10am - 5pm / Closed Mon & Wed

www.yarboroughhouse.com
01588 638318



SCHOPPER AG
(Switzerland)

The best partner for your Thorens TD 124 !
Restorations & Parts

www.thorens-td124.ch

BUY • SELL • TRADE
vinyl • CDs • DVDs • box sets

nothing legal refused! (ID required)

CLASSICAL MUSIC EXCHANGE

38 Notting Hill Gate, W11, open 7 days 10am - 8pm

www.mgeshops.com



020 7792 5847

**TO ADVERTISE PLEASE
CALL 020 7501 6368**

Approx. 2,000
Classical Records for sale

Over 100 boxed opera sets
Some good labels
Buyer to collect, Shrewsbury.
01939 291 396

CD MAIL ORDER SERVICE
FREEPHONE 0800 999 6994

Celebrating 11 years as a mail-order service to
those starting their love affair with music, clever
collectors, also to music groups and at concerts.

FREE P&P with your 1st ORDER

Colchester Classics, St Austell,
47 Gladwin Road, Colchester CO2 7HW

FREEPHONE 0800 999 6994

Email: liz@colchesterclassics.co.uk
www.colchesterclassics.co.uk

**COLCHESTER CLASSICS - WHERE
CLASSICAL MUSIC MATTERS!**

TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CALL 020 7501 6368

NOTES & LETTERS

The artistry of Alfredo Kraus • Boult and RVW • Rachmaninov in London • Retailers recalled

Write to us at Gramophone, Mark Allen Group, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB or gramophone@markallengroup.com

The stylish Alfredo Kraus

In 1958, near the beginning of his career, Alfredo Kraus sang alongside Maria Callas in the now legendary live recording of *La traviata* in Lisbon; then, in 1993, the year he made his very last complete operatic recording in the studio, he sang alongside Dame Kiri Te Kanawa – and the work was, remarkably, *La traviata* again. As Richard Fairman pointed out in his reflection on Kraus's distinguished career (May, page 62), his voice was little touched by age. A singing career spanning nearly four decades is indeed something for one to marvel at!

The longevity of his career can doubtlessly be attributed to his wisely chosen repertoire and his superb breathing technique. As Nicolai Gedda, another tenor who enjoyed a long singing career, once suggested, discipline is the key. In an era when wobblers were gradually taken and accepted, his evenly produced tone kept flowing like a spring. Kraus sang well into his sixties, and retained his high notes. In his last studio album in 1995, he was still able to include the aria 'Ah! mes amis!' from Donizetti's *La fille du régiment*, made famous by Luciano Pavarotti, and unashamedly display several high Cs.

With those 'money notes' at hand, Kraus remained the aristocrat among tenors. Today, he is remembered for the elegance and beautiful lines he delivered in his singing, instead of high notes and easy tricks. This demonstrates what his art is truly about.

Wei-Chin Chen
Taipei, Taiwan

Vaughan Williams – fast!

I was amused to be reminded after nearly 50 years of the RVW centenary concert at the 1972 Llandaff Festival, Geraint Lewis having mentioned it in 'Classics Reconsidered' (April, page 126). Nearly all the rehearsal time had been taken up with the Concerto for Two Pianos, a tricky work at the best of times, and, with less than an hour remaining, the orchestra (the RLPO) were wondering if we would ever get to the Sixth Symphony. To this day I can still see the twinkle in Sir Adrian Boult's eye as he eventually opened the score: 'I see we played this symphony together in 1954 – so just one or two

Letter of the Month

Rachmaninov's tears at RVW premiere

In 1948, coming from a family with sparse knowledge of, or interest in, music, I won a state scholarship to Dulwich College (Alan Hacker, Anthony Payne and David Greer were among the music naturals of my time).

In the 1960s, working with Michael Kaye (later General Manager of the LSO) on the setting up and running of the Peter Stuyvesant Foundation, I met André Previn on several occasions.

I mentioned to him that my passion for classical music had exploded into life in my first week at school, when we were seated in the music room and told: 'All you have to do is listen to this gramophone record.' It was the original recording of Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music*, and life was never the same again.



André smiled beatifically and told me the story (true, or apocryphal?) of Rachmaninov at the first performance, with tears in his eyes saying that he 'had never been so moved by music'. For me, it was the moment when I realised why Vaughan Williams's music would mean so much to me throughout the rest of my life.

Oliver Trigg
Ferring, West Sussex

The anecdote about Rachmaninov is almost certainly true as at the concert when the Vaughan Williams Serenade to Music received its premiere (Royal Albert Hall, October 5, 1938), Rachmaninov played his own Second Piano Concerto in the first half. The concerto's conductor, Felix Weingartner, recalled witnessing Rachmaninov's tears. – Ed.

prestoclassical.co.uk is a website that speaks your language, 'underpinned by an evident love of music and the world of recordings' (Gramophone). No other site selling classical CDs and DVDs is arranged in such a logical and accessible format, where you can easily find lists of composers' works, compare different options, view recommendations and read reviews. We believe you will find it one of the most user-friendly classical music sites on the internet. The Letter of the Month receives £50 of Presto Classical gift vouchers. Gramophone reserves the right to edit letters for publication

PRESTO
CLASSICAL

corners'. Memories of the standard of performance have not survived!

Brian Pidgeon
Frodsham, Cheshire

Harold Moores remembered

I was pleased to see that you published an obituary of Harold Moores (April, page 147). I first had dealings with Harold in the 1970s when he was able to secure the Weingartner Beethoven symphony cycle (on LP from Japan). In those days there were several specialist classical record retailers in or near central London. These included the Music Discount Centre with an initial shop near Regents Park and a subsequent chain. People who worked in the City had Farringdon Records, and discounted stock could also

be found at Templar Records. People who worked on the South Bank had John Goldsmith's Record Hunter. Other shops I recall include Henry Stave and EMG Handmade Gramophones. Jazz lovers had Dobell's in Charing Cross Road.

At all of these stores you could get advice about recordings from knowledgeable staff who were often keen to share their enthusiasms with you. Nowadays I cannot imagine asking the staff for their opinions. Is anyone else concerned at the disappearance of accessible, knowledgeable retailers, even from the centre of London. Or is everything now to be done remotely? And does it matter?

Dr Roger Brown
Southampton, Hants

OBITUARIES

A much-admired tenor and the soprano who saved the War Requiem

GERALD ENGLISH

Tenor

Born November 6, 1925

Died February 6, 2019



The English tenor whose long career embraced working with both Barbirolli and Beecham as well as appearing in Simon Rattle's Proms debut in

1976, has died at the age of 93.

A founder member of the Deller Consort, English's musical sympathies ranged from the Medieval to the modern, and he took part in numerous premieres by the likes of Richard Rodney Bennett, Tippett and Henze.

After studying at the Royal College of Music (where he'd later serve as a professor), he made his operatic debut as Peter Quint in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* under the composer's direction. He would also sing Pandarus in Walton's *Troilus and Cressida* (a role he recorded). His repertoire embraced, too, the roles of Andres and the Captain in Berg's *Wozzeck* which he performed in Paris, Milan (with Abbado conducting) and in Adelaide.

Reviewing a live 1969 recording of Britten's *Serenade* for tenor, horn and strings in August 2013, Rob Cowan wrote: 'Nothing gave me greater pleasure when listening to these three CDs than Gerald English's performance of the *Serenade*, his clarion, intelligently used tenor finding a perfect foil in Barbirolli's warmly phrased account of the orchestral score.'

After moving to Australia in the late 1970s, the tenor would champion local composers and, for his 70th birthday concert in 1995, 13 Australian composers wrote pieces for him.

HEATHER HARPER

Soprano

Born May 8, 1930

Died April 22, 2019



Heather Harper has died at the age of 88. The soprano stepped in at just 10 days' notice – when Galina Vishnevskaya was not granted permission to leave the USSR –

to sing the soprano part in the 1962 premiere of Britten's *War Requiem*:

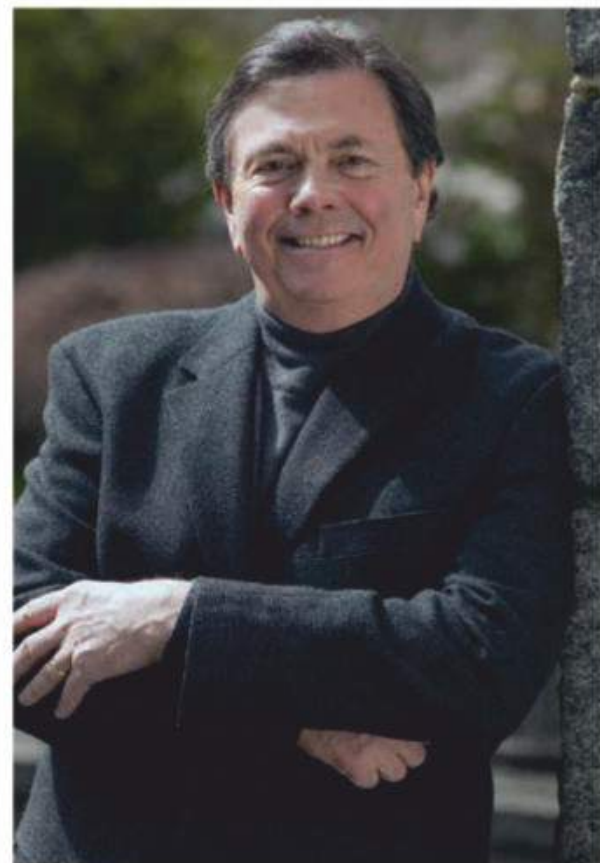
'We none of us knew exactly what it was we had in our hands,' she recalled later. At the first performance she was aware of having her nose in the copy: 'I felt I didn't know what it all was about till the night after.'

Born in Belfast, Harper studied at Trinity College of Music, initially as a mezzo and then as a soprano. Her first professional experience was with the George Mitchell Singers and the BBC Chorus. She made her stage debut in Verdi's *Macbeth* with the Oxford University Opera Club and then joined the English Opera Group where she sang from 1956 to 1975. Among her key roles were Elsa in Wagner's *Lohengrin* (which she sang at Bayreuth under Rudolf Kempe; Orfeo has released a recording from the 1967 Festival), the Empress in Richard Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (plus the Marschallin, Ariadne, Chrysothemis and Arabella), and the Countess in Mozart's *Figaro*; and also, notably, in four Britten operas: Ellen Orford in *Peter Grimes*, the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw* (she recorded both roles with Sir Colin Davis), Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Mrs Coyle in *Owen Wingrave* (a role she created in 1970). She sang at Covent Garden, the Met, in San Francisco and at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires.

Harper recorded extensively: she reprised the soprano part in Britten's *War Requiem* for Richard Hickox and Chandos, a set that won *Gramophone's* Engineering and Choral Awards in 1992. She appears on Sir Georg Solti's classic Decca recording of Mahler's Eighth Symphony, as well as the conductor's Mahler Second, on Carlo Maria Giulini's EMI set of Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* and on Otto Klemperer's disc of Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* music (both EMI). With Britten conducting, she recorded Bach's *St John Passion* (in English, for Decca) and appears on two of the RVW symphonies in Previn's RCA cycle. Other recordings include Barenboim's *Figaro*, Stokowski's Beethoven Ninth, and Tippett's *King Priam* and his Third Symphony (with Solti).

Of her Hickox Britten *War Requiem*, Alan Blyth wrote in November 1991: 'Vishnevskaya's hieratical utterance is something unique ... but for a comprehensive understanding of what Britten wanted, Harper is hard to equal.'

NEXT MONTH MONTH 2019



Gerard Schwarz's guide to rare 20th-century US symphonies

The American conductor flies the flag for works by Schuman, Hanson, Creston, Diamond, Mennin and Hovhaness

Vox Luminis at 15

Founder Lionel Meunier's vision for his early music French vocal group has never waived, he tells long-time devotee Lindsay Kemp

Four Serious Songs

Brahms's final song set has attracted a range of singers to its dark sound world, finds Richard Wigmore in this issue's Collection

GRAMOPHONE
ON SALE JUNE 19
DON'T MISS IT!

NEW RELEASES INDEX

The latest releases on CD, SACD, DVD, Blu-ray and download

Key: ⑆ Full price £10 and over ⑓ Medium price £7.76 – £9.99 ② Budget price £6.25 – £7.75 ⑤ Super-budget price up to £6.24 ③ Reissue ① Historic  SACD  DVD  Blu-ray ④ LP ⇄ Download only

CD & SACD

AEOLUS	<i>aeolus-music.com</i>
Various Cpsrs Playlist for Rembrandt – Hpd Wks. <i>Van Asperen</i> .	⑆ AE10164

ALPHA	<i>outhere-music.com/alpha</i>
Dvořák Pf Trios Nos 1 & 2. <i>Busch Trio</i> .	⑆ ALPHA466
Various Cpsrs Leonardo da Vinci: La musique secrète. <i>Doulce Mémoire/Dadre</i> .	⑆ ALPHA456
Various Cpsrs Morte della ragione. <i>Giardino Armonico/Antonini</i> .	⑆ ALPHA450
Various Cpsrs Si j'ai aimé. <i>Piau/Concert de la Loge/Chauvin</i> .	⑆ ALPHA445

AMBRONAY	<i>ambronay.org</i>
Various Cpsrs Laudario: Musique au temps de Saint François d'Assise. <i>Canticum Novum/Bardon</i> .	⑆ AMY052

ARCANA	<i>outhere-music.com/en/labels/arcana</i>
Landini Occhio del cor. <i>Reverdie/Deslignes</i> .	⑆ A462
Logroscino Stabat mater. <i>Talenti Vulcanici/Demicheli</i> .	⑆ A455
Scarlatti, D Mandolin Sons. <i>Pizzicar Galante</i> .	⑆ A115
Various Cpsrs Barlaam & Josaphat: Buddha – A Christian Saint?. <i>Dialogos/Livljanić</i> .	⑆ A458

ARTA	<i>czecheverything.co.uk</i>
Various Cpsrs Wks for Vn & Vc. <i>Hulová/Sedlak</i> .	⑆ F10231
ARTALINNA	<i>artalinna.com</i>
Debussy. Dupont Pf Wks. <i>Eckardstein</i> .	⑆ ATLA020
Debussy. Respighi. Stravinsky Wks for Pf Four Hands. <i>Stella/Madrigal</i> .	⑆ ATLA021
Scriabin Pf Wks. <i>Shimkus</i> .	⑆ ATLA025

AUDITE	<i>audite.de</i>
Prokofiev. Rachmaninov. Shostakovich Russian Legends – Wks for Vc & Pf. <i>Cheng² Duo</i> .	⑆ ② AUDITE23 442

AURIS SUBTILIS	<i>auris-subtilis.de</i>
Stamitz, CP Ten Syms. <i>Ens Amadeus</i> .	⑆ ② AS5083

AVIE	<i>avie-records.com</i>
Haydn. Vivaldi Vc Concs. <i>Croisé/Eurasian Sols CO/Mussakhan</i> .	⑆ AV2402

Schumann Cpte Pf Trios. <i>Horszowski Trio</i> .	⑓ ② AV2405
--	-------------------

BERLIN CLASSICS	<i>edel.com</i>
Albanese Twelve. <i>OST</i> .	⑆ 0301211NM
Burak Hermes. <i>Burak</i> .	⑆ 0301245NM ; ⑆ ④ 0301259NM
Mussorgsky. Tchaikovsky Pictures. <i>Djoric</i> .	⑆ 0301193BC
Schumann, C Pf Wks. <i>Schirmer</i> .	⑆ ② 0301194BC
Various Cpsrs Chiaroscuro. <i>Schumann Qt</i> .	⑆ 0301213BC
Various Cpsrs Illumination. <i>Silver-Garburg Pf Duo</i> .	⑆ 0301192BC
Various Cpsrs Volkslieder. <i>Schreier</i> .	⑆ 0301291BC

B RECORDS	<i>b-records.fr</i>
Ellington Take the 'A' Train Schubert 'Trout' Qnt. <i>Vourc'h/Savy/Rodde/Chassy</i> .	⑆ LBM019

BRILLIANT CLASSICS	<i>brilliantclassics.com</i>
Brun Cpte Orch Wks (r2003-15). <i>Moscow SO/Bratislava SO/Adriano</i> .	⑤ ① ③ 95784
Dussek Cpte Pf Sons, Vol 7. <i>Meniker</i> .	② 95606
Gilardino Wks for Gtr Qt. <i>Santorsóla Qt</i> .	② 95911
Giuliani Wks for Vn & Gtr. <i>Sacco/Dieci</i> .	② 95735
Pedini. Ugoletti Follia – Wks for Stgs. <i>KLK Stg Orch/Nazzaro</i> .	② 95822

Scarlatti, D Org Sons. <i>Reniero</i> .	② 95817
Taneyev Chbr Wks with Pf. <i>Cammarano/Deljavan/Castellitto/Agostinelli/Orlando</i> .	⑤ ③ 95766
Tosti Song of a Life, Vol 3. <i>Various artists</i> .	⑤ ④ 95431

Vivaldi Cpte Concs & Sinfs for Stgs & Basso continuo. <i>Archicembalo</i> .	⑤ ④ 95835
---	------------------

Wolf-Ferrari Idillio Concertino. Serenata. Ste Concertino. <i>Nuova Orch da Camera 'Ferruccio Busoni'/Belli</i> .	② 95875
---	----------------


Various Cpsrs Minimal Sax. <i>Freem Sax Qt</i> .	② 95909
--	----------------

CAPELLA DE MINISTRERS	<i>capelladeministrers.es</i>
Various Cpsrs Lucretia Borgia. <i>Capella de Ministrers/Magraner</i> .	⑆ CDM1946

CARUS	<i>carus-verlag.com</i>
Brumel. Josquin Leipziger Disputation. <i>Amarcord/Calmus Ens</i> .	⑆ CARUS83 497

C-AVI MUSIC	<i>avi-music.de</i>
Antheil Cpte Vn Wks, Vol 1: Vn Sons. <i>Fagiuoli/Toffanin</i> .	⑆ AVI8553239

CHALLENGE CLASSICS	<i>challenge.nl</i>
Handel Trio Sons, Op 2. <i>Al Ayre Español/Banzo</i> .	⑆ CC72797
Various Cpsrs Eclectic: Being Me – Pf Wks. <i>François, M</i> .	⑆ CC72804

CHANDOS	<i>chandos.net</i>
Elgar Stg Qt. Pf Qnt. <i>Roscoe/Brodsky Qt</i> .	⑆ CHAN10980
Grieg Chor Wks. <i>Edvard Grieg Ch</i> .	⑆  CHSA5232
Strauss, R Burleske. Vn Conc. Orch Wks. <i>Little/McHale/BBC SO/Collins</i> .	⑆ CHAN20034

Various Cpsrs Cembale transalpino from the Fitzwilliam Collection. <i>Yates</i> .	⑆ CHAN0819
---	-------------------

CHANNEL CLASSICS	<i>channelclassics.com</i>
Bartók Stg Qts Nos 1, 2 & 4. <i>Ragazze Qt</i> .	⑆ CCS41419

CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES SPECTACLES	<i>en.chateauversailles-spectacles.fr</i>
Various Cpsrs Grandes eaux de Versailles. <i>Various aritsts</i> .	⑆ CVS700

CORO	<i>the-sixteen.org.uk</i>
-------------	---------------------------

Various Cpsrs 40th Anniversary Collection. <i>Sixteen/Christophers</i> .	② ② ③ COR16172
--	-----------------------


COVIELLO	<i>covielloclassics.de</i>
Handel. Vivaldi In furore – Motets. <i>Kristof/Accademia di Monaco/Tschiedel</i> .	⑆ COV91902

Holst Sāvitrī Tarkmann Daughter of the Sun. <i>Arte Ens, Hanover/Schröfel</i> .	⑆ COV91903
---	-------------------


Reger. Schubert Dreamer – Wks for Vn & Pf. <i>Dauenhauer/Kuen</i> .	⑆ COV91907
---	-------------------

CRD	<i>crdrecords.com</i>
Farnon Concorde March. <i>LSO/Farnon</i> .	② ③ CRD6001


CYBELE	<i>cybele.de</i>
Szathmáry Org Wks. <i>Schmeding</i> .	⑆ ②  CYBELE2SACD061807


Yun Chbr Wks with Vc. <i>Bitter/Groschopp</i> .	② ④  CYBELE4SACDKIG011
---	--

DABRINGHAUS UND GRIMM	<i>mdg.de</i>
Molique Chbr Wks, Vol 1. <i>Trio Parnassus</i> .	⑆ MDG303 2116-2

Mozart Divertimentos, K439 <i>b</i> . Clemenza di Tito – Harmoniemusik. <i>Trio Roseau</i> .	⑆  MDG903 2095-6
--	--

Onslow Stg Qnt. Pf Qnt. Pf Sextet. <i>Luisi, G/Ens Concertant Frankfurt</i> .	⑆ MDG603 2117-2
---	------------------------

Schumann, C Cpte Songs. <i>Alexandra/Gijsbertsen/de Beenhouwer</i> .	⑆  MDG903 2114-6
--	--

Various Cpsrs Arp Schnitger & the Hamburg Org Tradition. <i>Vogel</i> .	⑆  MSG914 2125-6
---	--

LA DOLCE VOLTA	<i>ladolcevolta.com</i>
-----------------------	-------------------------

Bach, JS Bach to the Future – Org Wks. <i>Latry</i> .	⑆ LDV69
---	----------------

ECM NEW SERIES	<i>ecmrecords.com</i>
Schubert Pf Sons Nos 19 & 20. Pf Wks. <i>Schiff</i> .	⑆ ② 481 7252

ELOQUENCE	
Bach, JS Six Cantatas. <i>ASMF/Marriner</i> .	② ② ③ ELQ482 9722
Cavalli Calisto. <i>Sols/LPO/Leppard</i> .	② ② ③ ELQ482 9400
Cavalli Ormindo. <i>Sols/LPO/Leppard</i> .	② ② ③ ELQ482 9382
Couperin, F. Lully Sacred Wks. <i>Vyvyan/St Anthony Sgrs/Lewis</i> .	⑆ ③ ELQ482 8542

Herbert Vc Concs. Operetta Spectacular. <i>Harrell/Te Kanawa/Kingsway SO/Marriner</i> .	② ② ③ ELQ482 7305
---	--------------------------

Lassus Chor Wks. <i>Ch of King's Coll, Cambridge/Clebury/Christ Ch Cath Ch/Preston</i> .	② ③ ③ ELQ482 8566
--	--------------------------

Rameau Hippolyte et Aricie. <i>Sols/ECO/Lewis, A</i> .	② ② ③ ELQ482 9394
--	--------------------------

Wagner Götterdämmerung (pp1956). <i>Sols incl Flagstad/Oslo PO/Svanholm</i> .	⑤ ④ ③ ELQ482 8809
---	--------------------------

Wagner Tristan und Isolde (r1980-81). <i>Sols incl Mitchinson & Gray/WNO/Goodall</i> .	⑤ ④ ③ ELQ482 9496
--	--------------------------

Various Cpsrs Org at Sydney Op House. <i>Hurford</i> .	② ② ③ ELQ484 0351
--	--------------------------

Various Cpsrs Sound the Tpts. <i>Preston/Smithers</i> .	② ② ③ ELQ482 8629
---	--------------------------

Various Cpsrs Springtime in Yugoslavia. <i>Baranović/Zdravković/Lhotka/Huybrechts</i> .	② ② ③ ELQ484 0200
---	--------------------------

ETCETERA	<i>etcetera-records.com</i>
-----------------	-----------------------------

Tchaikovsky Stg Qt No 3. Souvenir de Florence. <i>Rusquartett/Hoffman/Nemtsov</i> .	⑆ KTC1641
---	------------------

Various Cpsrs Belgian Romantic Wks for Vc & Pf. <i>Heyman/Bengi</i> .	⑆ KTC1644
---	------------------

Various Cpsrs Ma Mère l'Oye – Arrs for Picc & Pf. <i>Verhoyen/De Schepper</i> .	⑆ KTC1625
---	------------------

FUGA LIBERA	<i>outhere-music.com/fugalibera</i>
--------------------	-------------------------------------


Various Cpsrs Lachrimae Iyrae. <i>Sinopoulos/L'Achéron/Joubert-Caillet</i> .	⑆ FUG753
--	-----------------



GEGA NEW	<i>english.geganew.com</i>
-----------------	----------------------------

Brahms. Schumann, C. Viardot Wks for Va & Pf. <i>Cvetkov/Angelov</i> .	⑆ GD390
--	----------------

Shostakovich Syms Nos 3 & 14. <i>Bulgarian Nat Rad Mixed Ch & SO/Tabakov</i> .	⑆ GD387
--	----------------












Various Cpsrs Folk Dances from Bulgaria. <i>Various artists</i> .	⑆ GD400
---	----------------

GOD RECORDS	<i>godrec.com</i>
Various Cpsrs Shattered Dimension. <i>Flying Lutenbachers</i> . ⓕ ② ● GOD54	
HARMONIA MUNDI	<i>harmoniamundi.com</i>
Bach, JS Cpte Kybd Wks, Vol 2. <i>Alard</i> . ⓑ ④ HMM90 2453/6	
Charpentier, M-A Histoires sacrées. <i>Ens Correspondances/ Daucé</i> . ⓑ (② + ) HMM90 2280/81	
Desyatnikov. Korngold. Schulhoff Yiddish Cabaret. <i>Jerusalem Qt</i> . ⓕ HMM90 2631	
Granados Goyescas (pp2018). <i>Sols/BBC SO/Pons</i> . ⓕ HMM90 2609	
Mahler Sym No 1. Blumine. <i>Siècles/Roth</i> . ⓕ HMM90 5299	
Mendelssohn Pf Conc No 2. Sym No 1. Schöne Melusine. <i>Bezuidenhout/Freiburg Baroque Orch/Heras-Casado</i> . ⓕ HMM90 2369	
Rachmaninov Pf Trios. <i>Trio Wanderer</i> . ⓕ HMM90 2338	
Schumann Kerner Lieder. Liederkreis, Op 24. <i>Goerne/Andsnes</i> . ⓕ HMM90 2353	
Various Cpsrs 40th Anniversary. <i>Arts Florissants/Christie/ Agnew</i> . Ⓢ ③ ● HAX890 8972/4	
Various Cpsrs Mr Handel's Dinner. <i>Steger/Cetra Baroque Orch</i> . ⓕ HMM90 2607	
HEVHETIA	<i>hevhetia.com</i>
Ferenczy. Lutosławski. Saint-Saëns Chbr Wks. <i>Quasars Ens</i> . ⓕ HVO180-2-331	
Lutosławski Dance Preludes Saint-Saëns Carnaval des animaux. <i>Maulne/Quasars Ens/Bufa</i> . ⓕ HVO180-2-331	
HYPERION	<i>hyperion-records.co.uk</i>
Bairstow. Harris. Stanford Chor Wks. <i>Westminster Abbey Ch/O'Donnell</i> . ⓕ CDA68259	
Beethoven Piano Sons Nos 1, 10, 21 & 22. <i>Hewitt</i> . ⓕ CDA68220	
Beethoven Pf Sons Nos 30-32. <i>Osborne</i> . ⓕ CDA68219	
Dufay Lament for Constantinople. <i>Orlando Consort</i> . ⓕ CDA68236	
Langgaard. Lassen. Scharwenka Vn Concs. <i>Roth/ BBC Scottish SO/Hermus</i> . ⓕ CDA68268	
Nicodé Pf Wks. <i>Callaghan</i> . ⓕ CDA68269	
Saint-Saëns Sym No 2. Urbs Roma. <i>Utah SO/Fischer, T</i> . ⓕ CDA68212	
Various Cpsrs Wks for St Katherine of Alexandria. <i>Binchois Consort/Kirkman</i> . ⓕ CDA68274	
INFINÉ	<i>infine-music.com</i>
Various Cpsrs Inland – Pf Wks. <i>Wagner, V</i> . ⓕ IF1050CD ; ⓕ ② ● IF1050LP	
LAWO	<i>lawo.no</i>
Beethoven. Frühling. Ness Cl Trios. <i>Trio ClariNord</i> . ⓕ LWC1126	
Mozart Divertimento, K563. Preludes & Fugues, K404a. <i>sSens Trio</i> . ⓕ LWC1170	
Strauss, R Also sprach Zarathustra. Heldenleben. <i>Oslo PO/ Petrenko, V</i> . ⓕ LWC1166	
LEONARDO	
Sanguinazzo Dilettante di Violoncello. <i>Berger</i> . ⓕ LDV14047	
Schale Hpd Sons. <i>Chiarizia</i> . ⓕ LDV14048	
LINN	<i>linnrecords.com</i>
Schütz Cantiones sacrae. <i>Magnificat/Cave</i> . ⓕ ② CKD607	
MÉTIER	<i>divine-art.co.uk</i>
Various Cpsrs Ogloudoglou – Avant-garde Voc Wks. <i>Stowe</i> . ⓕ MSV28593	
MMC	<i>musicandmediaconsulting.com/mmc-recordings</i>
Schroyens, R Music, My Fair Mistress – Songs. <i>de Renais/ Schroyens, D/London Voices</i> . ⓕ LUSPICD232	

MSR CLASSICS	<i>msrccd.com</i>
Bach, JS Goldberg Vars. <i>Repast Baroque Ens</i> . ⓕ MS1661	
Various Cpsrs Beyond the Traveler: Pf Wks by Cpsrs from Arkansas. <i>Burger</i> . ⓕ MS1686	
Various Cpsrs Poetic Visions – Org Wks. <i>Hell</i> . ⓕ MS1694	
Various Cpsrs Portuguese Perspectives – Wks for Ob, Pf & Stgs. <i>Miller/Kwon/Ens</i> . ⓕ MS1690	
Various Cpsrs Time Place Spirit – Wks for Fl & Pf. <i>Chandler/ Steinberg</i> . ⓕ MS1641	
Various Cpsrs To a Camia: Pf Wks from Romantic Manila. <i>Pinkas</i> . ⓕ MS1645	
MULTI.MODAL	<i>nmcrec.co.uk/multimodal</i>
Various Cpsrs Boundaries. <i>Toop/Hendrickse/Roberts/CUEE</i> . ⓕ ● MM02	
MUSO	<i>muso.mu</i>
Schubert Vn Sons. <i>Paulet/Isoir</i> . ⓕ MU029	
NEOS	<i>neos-music.com</i>
Altman Quiet Stone. <i>Altman/Kühnrich/Miolin/Mueller/Petkov/ Pfefferkorn</i> . ⓕ NEOS11907	
Cage. Ferneyhough. Wood Wks. <i>Ens Vertigo/Nouvel Ens Contemporain</i> . ⓕ NEOS11825	
NEW WORLD	<i>newworldrecords.org</i>
Thoegersen Thre Pieces in Polytempic Polymicrotonality. <i>Thoegersen</i> . ⓕ NW80812	
NIMBUS	<i>wyastone.co.uk</i>
Bach, JS Hpd Wks, Vol 3. <i>Lester</i> . Ⓜ ② NI5950	
Byrne/Summerhayes Stone Soup. <i>Byrne/Summerhayes</i> . ⓕ NI6373	
Carpenter Set. <i>Ballamy/RLPO/Rundell/Manze</i> . ⓕ NI6380	
Matthews, D Sym No 9. Orch Wks. <i>Trickey/Bradley/ESO/Woods</i> . ⓕ NI6382	
Various Cpsrs Natural Selection. <i>Dodo Street</i> . ⓕ NI6369	
Various Cpsrs Romance – Songs. <i>Rothschild/Farmer</i> . ⓕ NI6381	
NMC	<i>nmcrec.co.uk</i>
Wolters/Norman Catalogue d’Emojis. <i>Wolters/Norman/ Cobalt Duo</i> . ⓕ BRC006	
PASSACAILLE	<i>passacaille.be</i>
Various Cpsrs Seis Caprichos: Spanish Gtr Wks Around 1930. <i>Efstathopoulos</i> . ⓕ PAS1051	
PENTATONE	<i>pentatonemusic.com</i>
Donizetti. Verdi Op Arias. <i>Fabiano/LPO/Mazzola</i> . ⓕ  PTC5186 750	
Various Cpsrs Giardino dei sospiri. <i>Kožená/Collegium 1704/ Luks</i> . ⓕ  PTC5186 725	
PHASES	<i>phasesrecords.com</i>
Kozobolis Somewhere Else. <i>Kozobolis</i> . ⓕ ● PHA009V	
PIANO CLASSICS	<i>piano-classics.com</i>
Janáček Pf Wks. <i>Fejérvári</i> . ⓕ PCL10176	
Rachmaninov ‘Chopin’ Vars. Song Transcrs. <i>Osokins</i> . ⓕ PCL10166	
PRIMA FACIE	<i>primafacie.ascrecords.com</i>
Ellis. McCabe Old City New Image – Chbr Wks. <i>Camerata Ens</i> . ⓕ PFCD096	
RAMÉE	<i>outhere-music.com/ramee</i>
Telemann Chameleon. <i>New Collegium</i> . ⓕ RAM1904	
REGENT	<i>regent-records.co.uk</i>
Fisher, P Mystery of Things. <i>Proteus Ens/Cook/Shellard</i> . ⓕ REGCD250	
Various Cpsrs Beatam. <i>Ch of York Minster/Morris/Sharpe</i> . ⓕ REGCD522	
ROYAL FLEMISH PHILHARMONIC	
Benoit Religious Tetralogy. <i>Antwerp SO/Brabbins/de Vriend/ de Waart</i> . ⓑ ② RFP013	

SCRIBENDUM	<i>scribendumrecordings.com</i>
Haydn Cpte Syms. <i>Vienna CO/Märzendorfer</i> . Ⓢ (33 discs) ● SC818	
Various Cpsrs Art of (r1935-62). <i>Casadesus, R</i> . Ⓢ (30 discs) ● SC816	
Various Cpsrs Orch Wks (pp1956-62). <i>Columbia SO/ New York PO/Bernstein</i> . Ⓢ ④ ● SC514	
SIGNUM	<i>signumrecords.com</i>
Dvořák Stg Qts Nos 5 & 12 Suk Meditation. <i>Albion Qt</i> . ⓕ SIGCD555	
MacMillan One Equal Music. <i>Elysian Sgrs/Laughton</i> . ⓕ SIGCD575	
Striggio. Tallis Supersize Polyphony. <i>Ch of Gonville & Caius Coll, Cambridge/Armonico ConsortWebber</i> . ⓕ SIGCD560	
Tavener Protecting Veil. <i>Barley/Sinfonietta Riga</i> . ⓕ SIGCD585	
Various Cpsrs English Coronation 1902-1953. <i>Gabrieli Consort & Plyrs/McCreesh</i> . ⓑ ② SIGCD569	
Various Cpsrs From the Ground Up: The Chaconne. <i>O/Modernt/ Ticcianti, H</i> . ⓕ SIGCD574	
Various Cpsrs Hymns Album, Vol 2. <i>Huddersfield Chor Soc/ Batsleer</i> . ⓕ SIGCD572	
Various Cpsrs Locus iste. <i>Ch of St John’s Coll, Cambridge/ Nethsingha</i> . ⓕ SIGCD567	
SUPRAPHON	<i>supraphon.com</i>
Janáček Pf Wks. <i>Bartoš</i> . ⓕ SU4266-2	
TYXART	<i>tyxart.de</i>
Rolón Pf Wks. Pf Qt. <i>Corono/Ens</i> . ⓕ TXA18120	
Various Cpsrs Tr!jo Sonaten. <i>Debus/Bader/Lang, J</i> . ⓕ TXA18106	
DVD & BLU-RAY	
ACCENTUS	
Ravel Orch Wks (pp2018). <i>Lucerne Fest Orch/Chailly</i> . ⓕ  ACC20451 ; ⓕ  ACC10451	
ARTHAUS MUSIK	
Mozart Zauberflöte (pp1982). <i>Sols incl Boesch, Talvela & Schreier/VPO/Levine</i> . ⓕ  109 389	
CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES SPECTACLES	<i>en.chateauversailles-spectacles.fr</i>
Berlioz Damnation de Faust. <i>Sols incl Vidal & Antonacci/ Siècles/Roth</i> . ⓕ  CVS010	
C MAJOR ENTERTAINMENT	
Bernstein Young People’s Concerts, Vol 3. <i>Bernstein</i> . ⓕ  800608 ; ⓕ  800704	
Mahler Sym No 2 Zimmermann Nobody knows de trouble I see. <i>Hardenberger/Gubanova/Crowe/Bavarian Rad Chor/VPO/ Nelsons</i> . ⓕ  748908 ; ⓕ  749004	
Verdi Attila. <i>Sols incl D’Arcangelo/Comunale Th, Bologna/ Mariotti</i> . ⓕ  748708 ; ⓕ  748804	
Weber Freischütz (pp2015). <i>Sols incl Eröd/Staatskapelle Dresden/Thielemann</i> . ⓕ  733207	
DYNAMIC	<i>dynamic.it</i>
Vaccaj Giulietta e Romeo. <i>Sols/Scala Orch Academy/Quatrini</i> . ⓕ ②  37832 ; ⓕ  57832	
OPUS ARTE	
Massenet Manon. <i>Royal Ballet/ROH Orch/Yates</i> . ⓕ  OA1285D ; ⓕ  OABD7255D	
Tchaikovsky Swan Lake. <i>Orch of the ROH/Kessels</i> . ⓕ  OA1286D ; ⓕ  OABD7256D	

REVIEWS INDEX

A	Anonymous		Bellini		F Couperin		Fayrfax		Howells	
	Discovery	52	I Puritani	 94	Complete Works for Harpsichord	76	Eternae laudis lilium	89	The King's Herald	89
	Se pur ti guardo	90	Benda		Concerts royaux	58	Finger		Lady Audrey's Suite, Op 19	61
	Si de vos mi bien me aparto	90	Sonata	61	Les nations	58	A Ground	52	Piano Quartet, Op 21	61
	Antheil		Ben-Haim		Croft		Franck		Salvator mundi	90
	Violin Sonatas – No 1; No 2; No 3; No 4	56	Berceuse sfaradite	 40	O God, our help in ages past	89	Prélude, choral et fugue	75	String Quartet No 3, 'In Gloucestershire'	61
	Arcadelt		Evocation	 40	Czerny		G		Huang	
	Chiare, fresche et dolci acque	90	Three Songs Without Words	 40	The School of Velocity, Op 299 – No 1, Presto	77	Geminiani		The Merry Shepherd Boy	77
	Se per colpa del vostro fiera sdegno	90	Three Studies	 40	D		Concerto after Corelli, Op 5 No 11	52	I	
	Arensky		Toccata	 40	Daniel-Lesur		Gibbons		Iturralde	
B	Auber		Violin Concerto	 40	Le jardin clos	90	O clap your hands together	89	Pequeña Czarda	53
	La Sirène	94	Berlioz		Dean		Glass		J	
	Babell		Béatrice et Bénédic – Overture	81	Eleven Oblique Strategies	75	Perpetulum	65	G Jackson	
	Concerto, Op 3 No 1	52	Overture 'Le roi Lear'	81	Debussy		Glière		Ave Maria	89
	CPE Bach		Roméo et Juliette, Op 17	81	Arabesque No 1	75	Horn Concerto, Op 91	49	Janáček	
	Duetto, Wq150 H598	61	Berwald		Chansons de Bilitis	90	Gnattali		The Cunning Little Vixen	98
	JS Bach		Grand Septet	61	Trois Chansons de Charles d'Orléans	83	Canhoto	60	Janequin	
	Solo Cello Suites, BWV1007-1012 (arr for violin)	 68	Borodin		Children's Corner – Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum	77	Flor da noite	60	La guerre	90
	Solo Cello Suite No 1, BWV1007	75	String Quartet No 2	58	L'isle joyeuse	75	Maneirando	60	Jolivet	
	Erbarm dich mein, o Herre Gott, BWV721	68	Bowie		La mer	43	Negaceando	60	Serenade for Wind Quintet	61
	Fantasia, BWV572	68	Where are we now?	53	Rêverie	77	Perfumosa	60	Josquin	
	Fantasia and Fugue, BWV542	68	Brahms		Suite bergamasque – No 3, Clair de lune	75, 77	Poema	60	Inviolata, integra et casta es Maria	90
	Fugue, BWV578	68	Hungarian Dance No 4	52	R Dillon		Pretenciosa	60	Missa L'homme armé sexti toni – Agnus Dei	90
	Herzlich tut mich verlangen, BWV727	68	Intermezzo, Op 118 No 2	51	Ordering-Instincts	65	Uma rosa para o Pixinguinha	60	Tu solus qui facis mirabilia	90
	Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ, BWV639 (arr Busoni)	75	Mädchenlied, Op 107 No 5	90	Donizetti		Suite Antiga – Aria	60	K	
	In dir ist Freude, BWV617	68	Fünf Ophelia Lieder, WoO <i>posth</i> 22	90	L'ange de Nisida	95	Violino	60	Kálmán	
	Jesu, joy of man's desiring (arr Hess)	75	Piano Quartet No 1, Op 25	58	Flow my tears	53	Violin Sonata	60	Die Faschingsfee	98
	Die Kunst der Fuge, BWV1080 – No 1	90	Sie trugen ihn auf der Bahre bloss, WoO22 No 4	90	Duparc		Godowsky		Kodály	
	Minuet, BWV Anh114	77	Violin Concerto, Op 77	41	Au pays où se fait la guerre	90	Studies on Chopin's Op 25 Études and Trois Nouvelles études	71	Solo Cello Sonata, Op 8	75
	Musikalisches Opfer, BWV1079 – Ricercar a 3	61	Wie Melodien zieht es mir, Op 105 No 1	51	Romance de Mignon, Op 2 No 3	90	Gounod		Koechlin	
	Passacaglia and Fugue, BWV582	68	Braunfels		Dvořák		Grainger		Chansons de Bilitis, Op 39	90
	Prelude, BWV846	77	Fantastische Erscheinungen über ein Thema von Hector Berlioz, Op 25	41	Piano Quintet No 2, Op 81 B155	64	Shepherd's Hey	52	Hymne à Astarté	90
	Ricercare a 6, BWV1079	68	Sinfonia brevis, Op 69	41	String Quartets – No 5, Op 9 B37; No 12, 'American', Op 96 B179	60	Granados		Künstel	
	St Mark Passion, BWV247	 80	Bryars		E		Goyescas, Op 11 – No 5, El amor y la muerte (Balada)	75	St Mark Passion	84
	Sonatas for Violin and Keyboard – No 3, BWV1016; No 4, BWV1017; No 5, BWV1018; No 6, BWV1019	56	The Other Side of the River	65	R Edwards		CH Graun		L	
	Toccata and Fugue, BWV565	68	Bullock		Yanada	52	Sonata, GraunWV B:XVII:53	61	Lai	
	Das wohltemperirte Clavier, Book 1, BWV846-869	68	Come, Holy Ghost	89	Elfman		JG Graun		Love Story – Theme	53
	Bądarzewska-Baranowska		K Bush		Piano Quartet	43	Quintetto, GraunWV AV:XIV:14	61	Leclair	
	The Maiden's Prayer	77	This Woman's Work	53	Violin Concerto, 'Eleven Eleven'	43	H		Violin Concertos: Op 7 – No 2; No 6; Op 10 – No 2; No 6	44
	Bairstow		Byrd		Elgar		Handel		Ligeti	
	Blessed city, heavenly Salem	80	Exalt thyself, O God	83	Coronation March, Op 65	89	Chaconne, HWV435	52	Violin Concerto	41
	The Lamentation	80	Fantasia, BK62	83	O hearken thou, Op 64	89	Concerto (after HWV369 & 293)	52	Liszt	
	Let all mortal flesh keep silence	80	I will not leave you comfortless	89	Piano Quintet, Op 84	60	Passacaille, HWV399	52	Années de pèlerinage – année 2: Italie – Three Petrarch Sonnets	75
	W Barton		The Great Service	83	Pomp and Circumstance March, Op 39 No 1	89	Sonata, HWV362	52	Ave verum corpus, S44	84
	Kalkadunga Yurdu	52	O God, the proud are risen against me	83	String Quartet, Op 83	60	Suite (from HWV1 & 287)	52	Liebestraum, S541 No 3	75
	Beethoven		Sing joyfully	83	Eötvös		Trio, HWV386 <i>a</i>	52	Salve regina, S66	84
	Cello Sonatas Nos 1-5	57	C		Multiversum	 52	Zadok the Priest, HWV258	89	Vater unser, S29	84
	Cello (Horn) Sonata, Op 17	57	Chausson		Escaich		Handel/Leo		Via Crucis, S53	84
	Für Elise, WoO59	77	Chanson d'Ophélie	90	Mecanic Song for Piano and Wind Quintet	61	Rinaldo	 97	Luther	
	Piano Sonatas – No 1, Op 2 No 1; No 8, 'Pathétique', Op 13; No 10, Op 14 No 2; No 21, 'Waldstein', Op 53; No 22, Op 54; No 31, Op 110	69	Poème de l'amour et de la mer, Op 19	83	F		Harle		Rejoice today with one accord (arr JS Bach)	89
	Symphonies – cpte	40	Symphony, Op 20	83	Falla		Briggflatts – Rant!	53	M	
			Chopin		Jota	52	Harris		MacMillan	
			Prelude, 'Raindrop', Op 28 No 15	77	Nana	52	Bring us, O Lord God	80	From Galloway	52
			Clementi		Fasch		Faire is the heaven	80	O virgo prudentissima	89
			Sonatina, Op 36 No 1 – Andante	77	Andantino con variazioni, Op 17	61	Flourish for an Occasion	80	Saxophone Concerto	52
			Copland		Fauré		Strengthen ye the weak hands	80	Magnard	
			Billy the Kid	43	Piano Quartet No 1, Op 15	64	Henryson		Quintet for Piano and Winds, Op 8	61
			Grohg	43	Requiem, Op 48	83	North American Suite – Black Run	75		
							Hersant			
							Osterlied for Piano and Wind Quintet	61		

Mahler Das Lied von der Erde Piano Quartet Movement Symphony No 1 A Marcello Oboe Concerto – Adagio P Martin Bend D Matthews Recessional and National Anthem Mendelssohn Seven Songs Without Words Spinning Song, Op 67 No 4 Merbecke The Lord’s Prayer Milhaud Scaramouche – Brasileira Sonata for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet and Piano, Op 47 Monteverdi Era l’anima mia, SV96 Tempo la cetra, SV117 Morales Missa Dezilde al cavallero – Agnus Dei Mozart Piano Quartet No 1, K478 Piano Sonata No 16, K545 – Allegro Variations on ‘Ah, vous dirai-je, maman’, K265 Müthel Sonata N Nielsen Wind Quintet, Op 43 Nyman The Diary of Anne Frank – If P Pachelbel Complete Keyboard Works Parratt Confortare: Be strong and play the man Parry Chorale Fantasia on ‘O God, our help’ I was glad Pergolesi Stabat mater Pessard Andalouse Pettersson Symphony No 17 Violin Concerto No 2 Piazzolla María de Buenos Aires Prokofiev Piano Sonata No 7, Op 83 Poulenc La dame de Monte-Carlo Figure humaine Villageoises – No 2, Staccato Prokofiev Violin Concerto No 1, Op 19 Purcell Hear my prayer, Z15	Q Quantz Trio Sonata, QV2:20 R Rachmaninov The Isle of the Dead, Op 29 Preludes (cpte) Symphony No 1, Op 13 Trio élégiaque No 1 Rameau Les Indes galantes Rands Canti del sole Music for Shoko: Aubade Piano Concerto Ravel Complete Works for Piano Solo Pavane pour une infante défunte Sonatine Redford Rejoice in the Lord alway Reich Clapping Music Mallet Quartet Music for Pieces of Wood Proverb Pulse M Richter The Departure Rijnvos Amérique du nord Rore Anchor che col partire Or che’l ciel e la terra La vite fugge Rossini Le Comte Ory Roukens Boundless (Homage to LB) Rubbra Amicus meus S Saint-Saëns Danse macabre Morceau de concert, Op 94 La mort d’Ophélie Piano Concertos – No 3, Op 29; No 4, Op 44; No 5, ‘Egyptian’, Op 103 Symphonies – No 2, Op 55; ‘Urbs Roma’ Sakamoto Merry Christmas, Mr Lawrence Satie Trois Gymnopédies Schubert Gretchen am Spinnrade, D118 Four Impromptus, D899 Drei Klavierstücke, D946 Moment musical, D780 No 3 Octet, D803 Overture in the Italian Style, D590 Piano Sonatas – No 19, D958; No 20, D959 Piano Sonata No 21, D960 Rosamunde – Incidental Music, D797 Ständchen, D957 No 4 (arr Liszt, S560/7) String Quartet No 14, ‘Death and the Maiden’, D810 String Quintet, D956 Symphonies – No 1, D82; No 2, D125; No 3, D200	Schumann Adagio and Allegro, Op 70 (orch Ansermet) Konzertstück, Op 86 Sechs Gesänge, Op 107 – No 1, Herzeleid; No 4, Die Spinnerin Widmung, Op 25 No 1 (arr Liszt, S566a) Sculthorpe Djilile Segni Ricercar Sheppard Missa Cantate – Gloria; Agnus Dei Shostakovich Jazz Suite No 2 – Waltz No 2 Piano Quintet, Op 57 – Scherzo String Quartet No 8, Op 110 Skidmore Aliens with Extraordinary Abilities Sondheim Company Follies CP Stamitz Ten Symphonies Stanford ‘Coronation’ Gloria Evening Service, Op 12 Festal Communion Service, Op 128 – Gloria in excelsis For lo, I raise up, Op 145 O for a closer walk with God, Op 113 No 6 <i>b</i> A Song of Wisdom, Op 113 No 6 <i>a</i> R Strauss Ariadne auf Naxos – Es gibt ein Reich Burleske Duett-Concertino Vier letzte Lieder Vier Lieder, Op 27 Drei Lieder der Ophelia, Op 67 Malven Romanze Violin Concerto Wiegenlied, Op 41 No 1 Stravinsky The Rite of Spring Suk Meditation on an Old Czech Hymn, ‘St Wenceslas’, Op 35 <i>a</i> T Tallis Litany Salvator mundi Tavener Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God A Hymn to the Mother of God Song for Athene Tchaikovsky The Sleeping Beauty Symphony No 4 Tiersen La valse d’Amélie Traditional Dark eyes She moved through the fair Tüür Solastalgia	V Vasquez O dulce contemplación Por una vez que mis ojos alcé Qué sentís, coração mio Quien dice que l’ausencia causa olvido Si no os uviera mirado Vós me matastes Vaughan Williams The Lark Ascending Mass in G minor – Credo; Sanctus The Old Hundredth Psalm Tune O taste and see Six Studies in English Folk Song Vecchi Daspuò che stabilao Verdi Messa da Requiem Victoria Alma redemptoris mater Unus ex discipulus meis Villa-Lobos O canto do cisne negro Improviso No 7 W Wagner Isoldens Liebestod (arr Liszt, S447) Tannhäuser – Allmächtige Jungfrau; Dich, teure Halle Walton Coronation Te Deum Crown Imperial Viola Concerto Weber Clarinet Concerto No 1, Op 73 Der Freischütz Grand Duo concertant, Op 48 Weill Je ne t’aime pas Weinberg Solo Violin (Cello) Preludes, Op 100 (arr Kremer) String Quartet No 5, Op 27 Symphonies – No 2, Op 30; No 21, ‘Kaddish’, Op 152 SS Wesley Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace Whitacre Sainte-Chapelle Wiedoeft Valse vanité Willaert Dulces exuviae O dolce vita mia A Williams Shaping the Invisible J Williams Close Encounters of the Third Kind – excs Escapades – Closing In ET the Extra Terrestrial – excs Harry Potter – excs Hook – excs Indiana Jones – excs Jaws – excs Jurassic Park – excs Memoirs of a Geisha – excs Olympic Fanfare and Theme Schindler’s List – excs Star Wars – excs Superman – excs	Wolf Mignon Lieder C Wood O most merciful Wylkynson Salve regina Z Zemlinsky Piano Trio, Op 3 Collections ‘Blue Hour’ – Andreas Ottensamer ‘The Cello Queen’ – Zara Nelsova ‘The Chamber Music’ – Sigiswald Kuijken ‘The Complete Columbia Album Collection’ – Robert Casadesus ‘The Complete Recordings on Deutsche Grammophon’ – Seiji Ozawa ‘The Concertos’ – Sigiswald Kuijken ‘An Enduring Voice’ – Harry Christophers ‘An English Coronation 1902-1953’ – Paul McCreesh ‘Furtwängler Conducts Schumann and Tchaikovsky’ ‘German Radio Recordings, Vol 1’ – Max Fiedler ‘Die grossen Minnesänger’ – Various artists ‘Horizon 9’ – Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra ‘Imaginario’ – María Cristina Kiehr ‘In Circles’ – Amy Dickson ‘Koussevitzky Conducts Tchaikovsky’ ‘Leonardo: Shaping the Invisible’ – Robert Hollingworth ‘Love and Death’ – Martin James Bartlett ‘Mr Handel’s Dinner’ – Maurice Steger ‘Moderniste’ – Les Vents Français ‘Music for a King: Chamber Works from the Court of Frederick the Great’ – Florilegium ‘My Paris Years’ – Alain Lefèvre ‘The New York Concert’ – Emerson Quartet & Evgeny Kissin ‘Oblique Strategies’ – Andrei Ioniță ‘Perpetulum’ – Third Coast Percussion ‘Piano Book’ – Lang Lang ‘Reason in Madness’ – Carolyn Sampson ‘Rise’ – Jess Gillam ‘Toscanini Conducts Contemporary Russian Music’ ‘Toscanini Conducts Richard Strauss’
---	--	--	--	--

Cathy Marston

The British choreographer on how she finds resolution through music in her storytelling

In my work, I turn to stories for inspiration because I love the drama of them – but if I need peace or resolution, music nearly always provides the answer. That's true in my own life, too. I'm often on the road, but so long as I have a book to read and music to listen to, I feel like I'm at home.

For *Snowblind*, my piece for San Francisco Ballet which premiered last April, I turned to Edith Wharton's novella *Ethan Frome*. It's essentially a love triangle – there's a suicide pact, this great crisis – and it could all seem very melodramatic and rather like a horror story. But using Arvo Pärt's *Lamentate* at the end enabled me to find a sense of humanity in it all.

During my training at the Royal Ballet School, I'd often visit the office of the two choreography teachers. It had tons of LPs, and by the age of 16 I'd be hiding out there, listening to everything. Richard Blackford, the first Director of Music there, was also very encouraging in the idea of working with new composers. When I wasn't at school, I'd be in a music shop with CD players and headphones, trying to work my way through everything on the classical floor. But I was brought up to think that, as a choreographer, you had to use a whole piece of music. Then I moved to Switzerland, where they're very influenced by 'director's theatre' – the idea that a director can use the source material as they like.

When you make a story ballet, it's very unusual to take music off the shelf as written, especially if you're trying to squash a story into 30 minutes. So I've often worked with composers on new scores, or arrangements of existing ones. Philip Feeney, the Central School of Ballet's Music Director and Composer, has done a lot for dance, and we have worked many times together: on *Swan Maidens* (2015) which combined Sibelius and a surprising mix of other composers, *Jane Eyre* (2016), where we used Schubert and Mendelssohn alongside Philip's own music; *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (2018), based on Scriabin, and *Victoria* (2019), for which Philip wrote the whole score. With *Snowblind*, I wanted to use music by composers who were based in New England in 1900, and I came across the Boston Six, specifically Amy Beach and Arthur Foote. We found some beautiful piano pieces they'd both written, and Philip brilliantly managed to bring it all together, with the Pärt, so that it all feels like one piece.

I'd love to work with Lera Auerbach one day – she's given choreographers free rein to rework her music as they see fit. And then there's Gabriel Prokofiev. I loved his *Concerto for Turntables and Orchestra* – it had this playfulness which would suit the character of Puck in my version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2011). So we met, and I asked him how he would feel if we linked his music to Mendelssohn and also if he'd be prepared to write some extra music to hold it together. And he was very up for it.



THE RECORD I COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT

Pärt *Lamentate*

Netherlands Radio Chamber Philharmonic /
JoAnn Falletta Naxos

It's the journey that I love. The music becomes this heady whirl and then it finds peace.

For *Flight of Gravity* (2011) which brought together Bern Ballett and Camerata Bern as part of a Martinů festival, the orchestra encouraged me to look at contrasting works that I could imagine sitting next to his music. I ended up making a collage with Tartini, Silvestrov and Penderecki. I was really worried about it, and checked with the musicians that it could work, but everyone really liked it.

But there are still occasions, like *Victoria*, where I'll commission a new score from scratch. For example, when I caught the female beatboxer Steff La Cheffe on a TV show I thought she was amazing, and so I commissioned Dave Maric to write *And our faces vanish like water* (2010) for her and a soprano, as well as Camerata Bern. The musicians were integrated into the set, which was wonderful.

In fact, one of my favourite experiences was years ago at the Royal Opera House when I made a solo for Jenny Tattersall, in collaboration with the concertmaster Vasko Vassilev. We were in the studio, and Vasko wanted to get up close to Jenny. She did a grand jeté off the chair, he got in the way and the violin got knocked out of his hand – but he caught it! **G** *'Victoria' is currently on tour and is screened in cinemas on June 25 (northernballet.com); 'Snowblind' is performed by San Francisco Ballet at Sadler's Wells on May 31 and June 1 (sadlerswells.com)*

GRAMOPHONE

CHOOSE YOUR PACKAGE

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

Never miss an issue of the world's most authoritative voice on classical music, with five great subscription options to choose from.

THE COMPLETE PACKAGE

GRAMOPHONE THE CLUB

Our premium subscription option is a must-have for every classical music enthusiast. Combining all our subscription packages into one, joining The *Gramophone* Club is the most comprehensive and cost-effective way to enjoy *Gramophone*.

- ▶ 13 new print and digital issues during the year
- ▶ Read every issue of *Gramophone* since 1923
- ▶ Access to more than 45,000 recording reviews

From £26 / every 3 months*



THE DIGITAL PACKAGE

GRAMOPHONE DIGITAL CLUB

The complete digital subscription. Perfect for when you're on the move, the Digital Club gives you full access to every edition since 1923 and over 45,000 recording reviews.

From £23 / every 3 months*



OTHER SUBSCRIPTION PACKAGES

GRAMOPHONE PRINT

Receive 13 new print editions during the year, delivered straight to your door.

From £17 / every 3 months*

GRAMOPHONE DIGITAL

13 new digital editions during the year, plus every issue since 1923.

From £17 / every 3 months*

GRAMOPHONE REVIEWS

Searchable database of more than 45,000 expert reviews.

From £17 / every 3 months*

Three easy ways to subscribe

 magsubscriptions.com/gramophone  +44 (0)1722 716997  subscriptions@markallengroup.com

*Full annual retail price for Gramophone Print (13 issues) is £77.87; annual direct debit subscription price for Print, Digital or reviews Database (£67); Digital Club (£90); Full Club (£114). Stated subscription rates are based on a quarterly direct debit option (available for UK bank accounts). Postage and packaging is not included for overseas orders and will be applied at checkout. If you have a subscription enquiry then please email subscriptions@markallengroup.com.



© Southbank Sinfonia

Playing on our strengths to deliver first-class performance.

EFG is delighted to be the principal partner of the Southbank Sinfonia.

EFG Private Banking

efginternational.com

EFG International's global private banking network operates in around 40 locations worldwide, including Zurich, Geneva, Lugano, London, Madrid, Milan, Monaco, Luxembourg, Hong Kong, Singapore, Miami, Bogotá and Montevideo. In the United Kingdom, EFG Private Bank Limited's principal place of business and registered office is located at Leconfield House, Curzon Street, London W1J 5JB, T + 44 20 7491 9111. EFG Private Bank Limited is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. EFG Private Bank Limited is a member of the London Stock Exchange. Registered in England and Wales as no. 2321802. EFG Private Bank Ltd is a subsidiary of EFG International.